LOUISIANA
Conservationist

Summer Edition – '77

...comments

It is best not to swap horses while crossing the river.
— Abraham Lincoln

J. BURTON ANGELLE, *Secretary*

During the past six months every facet of magazine publishing has been explored in an effort to offset rising production, printing and postage charges of the Louisiana Conservationist.

We have fully looked into the practicality of turning to advertising or subscription fees, or both. Advertising in the Conservationist would have cut deeply into reading matter in the magazine and would not have produced appreciable revenue. Subscription fees, however modest, would have greatly reduced circulation of the magazine and constituted a disservice to the people of Louisiana.

In deciding against subscription fees at this time, it should be pointed out that they may become necessary in the future. Revenues from mineral royalties are declining each year, causing the Conservation Fund to shrink. We are fast approaching a point when we must take a hard look at all sources of revenue to determine if they are adequate to meet the demand for programs and services.

A survey of our readers conducted in the spring revealed that thousands of school teachers, Scout leaders, conservation and environmental groups, civic clubs and other organizations depend greatly upon this magazine for material about Louisiana's wildlife and fisheries resources. It is the only publication in the state dealing with the subjects, and stressing the need for wise management of these and related natural resources.

To restrict circulation of the magazine to paid subscribers at this time would have deprived thousands of people in Louisiana of a source of information about Louisiana's valuable resources and the need to perpetuate and enhance those resources.

It became clear to me that logical action at this time is to immediately convert the Conservationist from a bimonthly publication to a quarterly. This effects a surface saving of approximately thirty-five percent of present costs. However, those savings must be applied against continued rising costs as demonstrated in the early July increase in postal rates for magazines and newspapers.

Consequently, with this issue the Conservationist becomes a quarterly magazine. It will be mailed to our readers each summer, fall, winter and spring. It will continue its purpose of furthering conservation education, fostering awareness of the need for proper management of our wildlife and fisheries resources, and support for programs that best serve the interests of the people of Louisiana.

I am grateful to the many thousands of persons who took the trouble to write during the past few months and express their views about the importance of this magazine and the role that it plays in their activities. It would have been more difficult for me to reach a decision if it had not been for the great outpouring of sincere thought and counsel.

Now entering its 30th year of publication, the Conservationist will continue to go to the many thousands of sportsmen whose hunting and fishing licenses are an important part of the financial structure of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. In one sense, the magazine serves as a report to them of stewardship of the department over those prime forms of outdoor recreation.

I am particularly glad there will be no curtailment in sending the magazine to schools, libraries, teachers and students who find it an important source of reference material on wildlife and fisheries. It serves a unique function in this respect. No similar magazine is available to our school children and young students.

The magazine will continue to provide an insight to the diversified occupations that are so important to the overall economy of the state ...our trappers, shrimpers, oystermen, crawfishermen, crabbers and commercial fishermen. Their well-being and the entire fabric of their lives is hinged greatly to management of our wildlife and fisheries resources. Their problems and progress come alive in the pages of the Conservationist. They are very much a part of the Louisiana scene. It is also their magazine and their forum.

The magazine will continue to report on programs of improvement in wildlife and fisheries management. It will call attention to things that should be acted upon for the good of the public. Readers will be kept abreast of many programs that are important to our environment, our resources and our lives. It will keep them posted and informed of many things that make Louisiana a good state in which to work and play.

The magazine will continue to be one that means so many things to so many people, as was revealed in lengthy expressions from thousands of people writing in. The Conservationist will continue to be the link binding us together in programs of action to best manage our heritage.

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Published by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in the interest of conservation of Louisiana's natural resources.

LOUISIANA Conservationist

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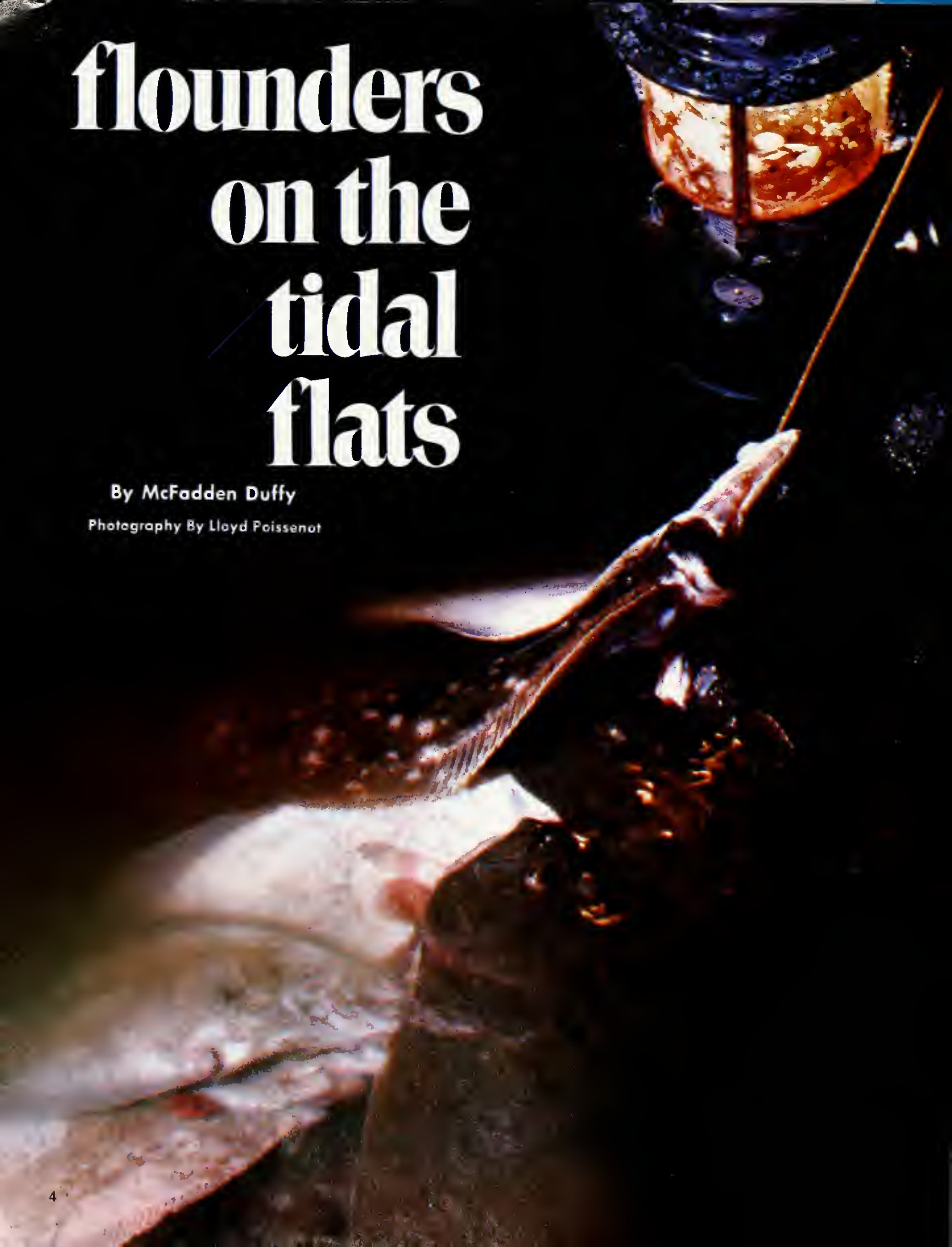
flounders on the tidal flats

By McFadden Duffy

Photography By Lloyd Poissenot



A gentle wind broke the brassy heat of early evening as the four of us left the anchored boat and waded abreast across the tide-inundated mud flat. It was dark. The moon hadn't risen yet. The soft blackness of night was broken only by orange-white light from gasoline lanterns. The light cast grotesque shadows across the water and illuminated the soft mud bottom that was covered by scant inches of lapping tidewater.

Aside from the occasional call of a bird on the grassy shoreline of the small cove, there was no sound other than our voices as we softly talked. Occasionally we could see the jeweled eyes of darting shrimp. Small fish skittered away in haste as we approached. Blue crabs, searching the shallows for food, backed off with claws raised menacingly.

We were hardly more than 50 feet from the boat when Norman Crosby spotted the first flounder. He leaned forward and drove his gig down into the water with a quick, forceful thrust. The sharp nine-inch spear attached to the light aluminum shaft penetrated the flounder and was imbedded in the sandy mud bottom, pinning the fish down. The fish splashed about, turning the shallow water into foam in an effort to escape.

Bobby Santiny and Lloyd Poissenot moved closer. Santiny took Crosby's lantern to hold it while his companion strung the flounder. Crosby had fastened a "Grand Isle stringer" to his belt when we left the boat and started wading. It was nothing more than an eight-foot length of quarter-inch nylon rope. There was a float at one end. The end fastened at his belt was fixed to a metal tip that could be easily pushed through a flounder's mouth and gills.

He guided the flounder onto the stringer and shook it down the length of rope toward the float. Then he refastened the other end to his belt and retrieved his lantern from Santiny. The fish had been kept impaled on the spear until it was safely on the stringer.

It was less than an hour since we had left Nat Chighizola's place on Grand Isle. Nat runs a souvenir and tackle shop on the island and is an expert surf fishermen. He's an ardent member of the resort's tourist development commission and had arranged the trip with Crosby and Santiny after we had a conversation about the keen sport that floundering offers.

"They are two of the best flounder giggers on the island," he had told us enthusiastically. "They know where the fish are and would be glad to take you along."

That was all the urging we needed. It had been about 10 years since I had prowled the beaches and coves at Grand Isle with a gasoline lantern and gig. Two major storms had changed the shoreline a lot. We welcomed the idea of going with someone who was up-to-date on this business of going after flounders at night.

Flounders camouflage themselves by burying all but mouth and eyes in sandy mud along the shorelines. But nature has also given this mottled brown flatfish unexcelled protective coloring and the ability to change colors to a certain degree.

It turned out that Crosby and Santiny wanted to work a mud flat not far from the island itself. The island was good but they thought this spot would be better. It was only a 10 minute boat ride from the launch site at Fishermen's Wharf on the east end of the island. We had lost little time in getting the two lanterns lighted and anchoring the boat in the shallows.

"It is going to be a good night," said Crosby softly, reaching out and taking his lantern back from Santiny. "The full moon will be up shortly and we are going to have a busy night."

We paired off again, Poissenot going with Crosby. I stayed alongside Santiny, watching the mud-sand bottom for the telltale outline of a flounder buried lightly under the siltlike mixture.

Both Santiny and Crosby were lifelong residents of Grand Isle. They worked for an oil company and were hunters and fishermen. Both had used gigs and lanterns for flounders since childhood. We talked softly as we moved along.

Santiny said that July was probably the best month for floundering around Grand Isle. August and September were excellent months, too. He felt there was some sort of summer migration of flounders into those waters. At least it seemed so to him, based upon years of experience. Sometimes the big runs start in June and continue for four months or more. These fish are taken all year 'round but those seem to be the best months.

Our conversation was interrupted when Santiny pulled up short and jabbed his gig into a flounder that was barely perceptible in the layer of sandy mud that covered the tidal flat. Nature has given this mottled brown flatfish unexcelled protective coloring, plus the ability to change colors to a certain degree.

This one had buried itself with only its head and eyes uncovered. I saw the outline plainly as Santiny's gig drove home. Its splashing made the water murky and we could no longer see the fish.

"It is a nice one," he said, handing me the lantern to hold. I watched him lower the handle of his gig and then lift the spear end with a deft movement that left the flounder impaled on the steel shaft. The

Bobby Santiny and I wade knee-deep in water along the Grand Isle mudflats. Satiny is a sheer "pro" with the gig and lantern, and can spot a flounder in the most concealing places.

butt end of the gig was pushed down in the mud to hold it upright. He grasped the spear tip to steady the gig and we admired the big flounder.

While this was going on Crosby and Poissenot had taken another one. We watched them string the fish and then they moved toward us, the fish trailing behind them on the long stringer. The flickering light from the lantern bounced off the white float that helped keep the flounders from catching on the bottom. They trailed along easily.

Crosby quickly strung the fish that was on Santiny's gig and we moved forward again looking for more flounders.

There are several species of flounders and they are favorite food fish everywhere, having delicious white, flaky meat. Besides being highly prized for the table, these flounders have a lot in common. Their growth and habits rank them among the ocean's strangest inhabitants.

Santiny moved his lantern from side to side, letting the light sweep across the water in front of us in broad rhythmic arcs. I spotted the outline of a flounder just as my foot almost touched it. The fish shed its protective camouflage of mud and darted away, leaving a murky streak as it sped across the bottom.

"I darn near stepped on that one," I said. Santiny laughed. The moon had risen and the small cove where we were floundering was bathed in an orange glow. Light from the moon turned to silver on the water and we could see the reflection on the surface of the water as it pulsed with tidal movement.

Santiny cautioned me to watch out for stingrays. Those big flatfish with loose multi-barbed spines present a threat to folks who like prowling the beaches and tidal flats for flounders. They move into the shallows much like flounders and will lie on the bottom camouflaged with sand or mud, just like flounders. The barbed spines of stingrays are defense mechanisms and there have been cases of persons wounded while floundering. But they are rare cases and there's no cause for fear. Simple caution is recommended.

Crosby and Poissenot were taking a lot of flounders real close to the shore. We moved nearer and got in on the action. It wasn't more than two minutes after we shifted closer to shore that Santiny gigged a huge flounder. It was taken in water that was only three or four inches deep. Santiny had trouble lifting it with his gig so he reached under the fish and grasped the spear end. That's a recommended way of retrieving a flounder that has been speared. Lifting them up on the gig calls for an expert's touch.

After the fish was safely on the stringer we went ashore for a minute so we could prime the lanterns. I could see the lights of Grand Isle glowing in the darkness. It was hard to realize that we had ventured only a couple of hundred yards from the boat. In the moonlight I could see the opening to the small cove. Our boat was riding at anchor in about two feet of water just beyond the entrance. It was screened from sight by a clump of reseau cane near the cut leading to the cove but we hadn't waded very far.

(Above, left) Satiny makes his strike and the water churns into a muddy brown paste. (Below, left) In the few hours we spent walking the flats, Satiny came up with several doubles – two flounders nabbed on close strikes without taking the first catch off the gig . . . and that takes skill. (Above) He brings a big flounder off the bottom. In just one evening, the four in our party brought home 29 nice fish.

"Whadaya need to go floundering? Well, you gotta have a gig, a lantern, a stringer, a pair of sneakers, an old pair of pants, and . . . a love for the excitement of getting out at night on the mudflats and catchin' a mess of fish!"

While we were standing there talking I asked Crosby and Santiny if they took very many softshell crabs while they were floundering. We had seen some crabs in the water but not many. On the Mississippi gulf coast it is not unusual for persons to take a few nice softshell crabs while they are looking for flounders. The practice is to tap all crabs with the tips of gigs to determine if they are soft.

"It might be that the crabs go deeper into the estuaries to shed," Crosby said. "I hear stories about people taking quite a few good crabs while floundering but we don't find many of them. Maybe that's because we are so close to the gulf."

I told them about finding a stone crab while floundering along the Grand Isle beach a long time ago. They are highly prized, especially in Florida where stone crabs are common. It was the only one I had ever seen in Louisiana waters. Discoveries like that are part of the fun in working the flats at night with a lantern and gig.

We had about two dozen flounders on the stringer. They ranged from about a pound to nearly two pounds. That's a lot of fish so we decided to head back to the boat, wading slowly and trying to pick up a few more.

Floundering is keen sport along the gulf coast, clear from Texas around Florida and edging up the lower Atlantic. It dates back a long time. One hears stories about early sportsmen using pine knots for light in the days before gasoline lanterns. They used to carry the pine torches in big baskets, according to the stories. It is a companionable sport. Conversation doesn't spook the fish and they are relatively easy to approach.

We didn't hurry getting back to the boat. It was a mild night after a searing summer day and we were in no hurry to leave the little cove where a hint of an easterly wind tugged at the surface of the water. We picked up a few more flounders before reaching the boat.

It doesn't take a lot of equipment to go floundering. A lantern is a must. Popular gasoline lanterns have proved best. Electric lanterns and flashlights have a tendency to be too powerful and concentrated. This causes a bounce-back of the light, instead of an even source. Gigs can be purchased in most sporting goods stores. Stay clear of any spear tips with barbs. The barbs will tear up a fish and aren't necessary. Gigs can be fashioned easily from broom sticks and suitable metal rods to serve as spears. Tennis shoes are advised for walking. They protect the feet from oyster shells and other objects that might cut.

The tide has a lot to do with successful floundering. A rising tide is ideal. Direction of the wind has little effect, if the wind is light. Squally weather should be avoided. A bright moon makes getting about in the dark easier but has little known effect on flounders.

We were grateful to Bobby Santiny and Norman Crosby, and to Nat Chighizola for setting up the trip. There's something downright satisfying about flounders on the tide flats. A mid-summer night's dream (come true), we'd say.

The American Kestrel

By Murrell Butler

The beautiful little kestrel whose official name was once *Sparrow Hawk* is the smallest member of the falcon family found in the United States. It is the only one commonly found in Louisiana.

The bird is most numerous here during the winter months, but a few do remain throughout the summer to breed. As with other members of the falcon family, the American kestrel was often used by beginning falconers in this country just as medieval falconers did with its near twin, the Old World Kestrel. Yet even though easily trained for hunting and swift of flight, the sparrow hawk lacks the size and strength to capture and retrieve anything larger than a sparrow.

There is a distinct plumage difference between the male and female kestrel as well as a size difference. The female is the larger of the pair. Her plumage is predominately reddish brown barred with black. The male, being the more brightly colored, is distinguished by its slate-blue wings and red, unbarred, black-tipped tail. The bird I have depicted in the painting is a male.

A good place to spot a kestrel is along country roads where they perch on telephone poles or fence posts, intently scanning the grass below for insects or mice. The sparrow hawk has a habit of frequently jerking its tail up and down, which is a great help in identification. The call is a shrill *killy-killy-killy*, and that gives rise to another common name "Killy Hawk." To the French-speaking people of Louisiana this little hawk is known as the "Ermillion," which is merely the Old World designation for the "falcon."

The American kestrel has particularly beneficial feeding habits for a hawk. Its diet consists mainly of insects such as the grasshopper. It does supplement this from time to time with mice and occasionally very small birds. It has the interesting habit of hovering motionless in mid-air when it has spotted its prey, just as a tern does when zeroing-in on a fish in the ocean.

The sparrow hawk is something of an aerial gymnast, quite adept at playful flight maneuvers. These antics are best described by the early naturalist, William Brewster, in his journals of 1888.

"*September 12. – In a broad expanse of hilly burnt ground bordering on the Dead Cambridge above the Sluice we saw a Sparrow Hawk amusing himself at the expense of two Flickers. Calling clac-lac-clac-lac-clac-lac he would first hover over them for a few seconds and then dart down close past them, to rise and hover again. Whenever they took flight he accompanied them, describing graceful curves and circles above and around them. That all this was done without malice on his part seemed obvious, and the Flickers evidently so interpreted it, for they showed no fear of him and more than once flew into a tree where he had just settled, alighting within a few feet of him.*"

For nesting, the kestrel chooses a natural cavity in a tree or an abandoned nesting hole of one of the larger woodpeckers. It may also be entitled to utilize a bird house built to proper specifications and placed in suitable location. The three to five rounded eggs have a creamy pink ground color and are spotted with fine dots of varying shades of brown.

The kestrel ranges from northern Alaska to Nova Scotia and south to Chile.

The FISH/SCALE Connection

On these pages are some of the finest fish stories ever told . . . and they're all true! These are the Louisiana Record Fish, known by sportsmen as the "Top Ten." Every year, when the records are published, there is probably some fisherman in the state who realizes that if he had only taken the trouble to register his catch, his name would be here for everyone to see. Or even more tantalizing, since some of the categories don't have the ten places filled, just registering a fish will qualify it for listing in this elite group. There are only ten spots open and any new record means someone's catch drops off into anonymity. A record becomes official only after a Louisiana Outdoor Writers' Association affidavit is completed and mailed to Dan Hardesty, sports editor of the Baton Rouge State-Times, who is the official tabulator. Forms for entering a prize fish may be obtained by writing the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Information Section, 400 Royal Street, New Orleans, LA 70130.

By Dan Hardesty

Lloyd Poissenot

— SALTWATER SPECIES —

AFRICAN POMPANO

23-2	Clyde H. Martin	Sept. 1975
22-11	Jeff Patout	Nov. 1975
17-0	Beau I. Greenwald	Sept. 1975
15-8	Bill Hodges	Oct. 1975
13-4	Harry H. Anderson	Aug. 1975
13-0	Jesse B. Lane	Jan. 1973
11-14	Jack Kelley	Aug. 1975
11-2	Mike Podgurski	Aug. 1973
10-4	Mrs. Jesse B. Lane	Jan. 1973
9-8	Betti Walker	June 1972

AMBERJACK

106-12	Milton J. Mouton	Aug. 1975
87-0	Perry Elin Pitre	June 1976
86-8	Sonny Ourso	July 1974
86-4	Frank Ecker	July 1969
83-0	George Tucker	July 1959
80-2	Rhett Pitre	June 1975
78-8	Sonny Ourso	March 1972
78-0	John L. Di Miceli, Jr.	July 1974
77-0	Clovis H. Luquette	June 1974
76-12	Whitney Vincent, Sr.	Aug. 1974

ATLANTIC CROAKER

8-0	Douglas J. Bernard	Aug. 1972
5-5	Eugene Lefort, Jr.	Aug. 1970
5-4	Eugene Lefort, Jr.	Oct. 1970
5-2	Lloyd J. Babin	Oct. 1969
5-0	William Sparacello	Aug. 1972
4-14	Joseph D. Toups, Jr.	1966
4-11	Judge Alvin Oser	Aug. 1973
4-10	Eugene Lefort, Jr.	Oct. 1970
4-9	Eugene Lefort, Jr.	Oct. 1970
4-9	Eugene Lefort, Jr.	Oct. 1970

BLACKFIN TUNA

25-4	Gerald J. Link	Sept. 1976
24-12	Mrs. Adelia L. Robichaux	Nov. 1971
23-14	Michael X. St. Martin	Oct. 1974
23-14	Richard Braud	Oct. 1974
23-0	Wilson Miramon	Dec. 1976
22-12	Dr. J.P. Thrasher	Oct. 1971
22-0	Dr. Tom I. Greenberg	May 1971
22-0	Jack Kelley	May 1976
21-8	Jesse B. Lane	May 1971
21-6	Rol Crum	Oct. 1972

BARRACUDA

50-0	A. C. Mills	Aug. 1970
48-0	Dr. Thomas F. Kramer	Oct. 1975
47-8	Lester L. Jay	Aug. 1972
44-8	Jep. E. Turner, Jr.	Sept. 1968
42-0	Bob Marino	July 1972
41-8	Harry Barbay	July 1976
40-0	J.J. Jones	Sept. 1966
39-0	Arthur Hosli	Oct. 1971
38-6	Sanford B. Dooley	June 1974
38-4	Nolan McCrain	July 1967

BLUEFISH

16-8	Leon Kolmaister	Sept. 1971
16-4	Joseph Steverson	March 1971
14-12	Mrs. Dorothy Lane	July 1972
13-8	Gary Oberg	Aug. 1974
12-15	Joseph C. Schouest, Sr.	Sept. 1975
12-14	Murphy J. Foster III	Aug. 1973
12-14	Eugene C. Kwiatkowski	March 1975
12-10	Capt. Bob Davis	April 1975
12-8	James F. Collins	Sept. 1970
12-5	Mrs. Rhoda Latino	Feb. 1975

BLUE MARLIN

686-0	Alvin E. DuVernay, Jr.	Aug. 1969
613-8	Noonie Guilbeau	July 1976
612-0	John C. Boyce	July 1976
572-0	Guy C. Billups, Jr.	Aug. 1974
565-12	Jeanne deBarillas	July 1972
565-0	Al R. Childress, Jr.	Aug. 1966
557-0	J. Harman Chandler	July 1973
552-4	R.J. Careere, Jr.	Aug. 1973
537-4	Pio Lyons	July 1974
535-0	R.J. Carrere, Jr.	Aug. 1970

BONITO

29-12	Sidney Gonsoulin	July 1974
26-8	Al "Teppy" Daboval, Jr.	July 1973
24-12	Joseph W. Gex	June 1970
24-9	Stirling Couch	July 1949
24-8	Erin M. Burks	Aug. 1971
23-0	Charles Andres, III	July 1949
20-0	Mrs. Lester Plaisance	July 1959
18-0	Mark Landrieu	July 1974
17-8	Leonard Bertucci	Aug. 1971
16-4	G.R. Murphy, Jr.	Aug. 1969

COBIA

96-0	Charlie Hardixon	June 1973
82-12	Alphonse S. Hebert, Sr.	Nov. 1967
82-8	Harry Morris	May 1966
80-4	J. Edward Slatten, Jr.	May 1976
80-0	Dr. James C. Brousseau	June 1973
80-0	Dr. John L. Beyt	May 1976
79-3	Glenn Aycock	May 1973
78-0	Elmer Walker, Jr.	May 1971
77-0	William P. Scaife	June 1974
76-0	Ken Graef	June 1971

BLUEFIN TUNA

859-0	Jack A. Brown	June 1971
631-12	Roy V. Eskine	May 1972
580-0	Jack A. Brown	June 1971
526-4	Jack Kimmerly	May 1975
512-8	John D. Charbonnet	May 1971
440-0	Jim Meriwether	May 1963
120-0	Pete Menefee	July 1966

BROADBILL SWORDFISH

112-8	Geo. M. Snellings, III	July 1969

DOLPHIN

71-4	Robert Prest, IV	June 1976
62-8	Mike Pratt	June 1973
60-12	Henry F. Page	June 1973
59-12	Stuart W. Wilson	June 1969
56-12	Wayne Plaisance	June 1968
56-3	David Brenham	June 1976
54-12	Maumus F. Claverie, Jr.	July 1973
54-0	August Perez, Jr.	July 1966
53-8	Clyde V. Hawk	June 1967
53-8	Salvatore Perino	July 1966

DRUM

77-0	Timmy Joseph Darcey	April 1975
61-15	Walton J. Theriot	June 1974
58-3	Laddie Portier	Aug. 1974
56-9	Davis Doucet	July 1974
55-4	Dick Trosclair	April 1974
54-8	Richard Ledet, Sr.	May 1975
50-1	Kenneth Pierce	July 1974
50-0	Norris Schexnider	July 1974
49-2	Dick Trosclair	July 1974
48-10	Mark Stephen Hebert	March 1974

FLOUNDER

12-2	Clarence Craig	Feb. 1969
11-1	Clarence Craig	Nov. 1967
11-0	Lee W. Coulon	Nov. 1967
11-0	George E. Stevens	Nov. 1967
11-0	Henry Schomaker	Dec. 1968
10-12	Mrs. Joseph Fousse, Jr.	Nov. 1970
10-0	Richard J. Boll, Jr.	July 1965
9-12	F. D. Laney Eaves	Aug. 1970
9-0	F. J. Fontenot	Dec. 1970
8-10	Paulton Hebert	Oct. 1958

HORSE EYE JACKFISH

14-11	Amos V. Moack	Oct. 1974

JACK CREVALLE

43-0	Christian J. Smits	May 1976
41-14	Elmo Robichaux, Sr.	Oct. 1973
41-4	Joseph M. Roth	Aug. 1975
41-0	Eddie Denny	June 1976
40-8	George J. Bertucci	Oct. 1973
40-5	George Huber	July 1974
40-0	Edwin F. Stacy, Jr.	July 1953
40-0	Fred F. Pichon	Nov. 1970
40-0	Bob McDonald	Sept. 1972
40-0	Sidney Triche	June 1973
39-11	James Eichorn, Jr.	June 1976

KING MACKEREL

72-0	A. Roger Lee, Jr.	Feb. 1976
71-0	Frank J. Mohre	Dec. 1974
69-13	Paul Wiggins	Jan. 1975
69-8	Bill Golden	Nov. 1974
68-8	Edward C. Beshoner, Sr.	Mar. 1974
68-8	Paul J. Tregre	March 1975
68-6	D.R. Payne	Oct. 1972
67-14	Doug White	Dec. 1972
67-12	Monte Thrailkill	Dec. 1971
67-4	J.J. Morales	Jan. 1974

MAKO SHARK

400-0	Jules E. Guglielmo, Sr.	July 1972
358-8	D.R. Payne	July 1973
280-0	Leander H. Perez, Jr.	Aug. 1967
268-0	Mrs. Alma L. Burks	July 1971
265-8	Richard Landry	May 1975
259-8	J.W. Duffy	May 1970
190-0	Dr. M.E. Brierre	July 1970
186-0	Dr. Wilson P. Couch	Aug. 1975
179-8	Gen. Raymond Hufft	May 1966
179-8	Guy C. Billups, Jr.	Aug. 1966

POMPANO

8-8	Buddy Pons	Dec. 1969
6-13	Hugh R. Babylon	Dec. 1970
6-10	Clement Andollina	Dec. 1970
6-8	U. S. Allan	Jan. 1971
6-4	Felix C. Byxbe	Dec. 1970
6-4	Lamar J. Callaway	Nov. 1971
6-3	Louis U. Thornton	March 1967
5-12	Cecil Jones	Nov. 1970
5-12	Holt H. Fastring	Dec. 1970
5-9	H. H. McCain	Dec. 1953

SPANISH MACKEREL

10-9	Mike LeBlanc	Aug. 1972
9-1	James P. Antill	Aug. 1971
8-9	Warren Fisher, Jr.	Oct. 1974
8-4	Anthony C. D'Antonio	Nov. 1970
8-2	Mrs. Earlise Lefort	July 1975
8-1	Pat Matherne	Aug. 1973
8-0	Earl E. Wall	Aug. 1973
7-12	Addis McDonald	Sept. 1969
7-9	Danny John Smith	June 1975
7-8	Richard Gray	Nov. 1968

SPEARFISH

78-0	Larry Bulot	July 1964
27-15	Stephanie Slatten	July 1974
20-4	Mrs. Guy C. Billups, Jr.	1969

SPECKLED TROUT

12-6	Leon Mattes	May 1950
10-12	Randolph D. Green	Aug. 1970
10-0	David G. Buccola	May 1974
9-14	James L. LeMay	April 1970
9-12	John W. Burns	March 1968
9-12	Anthony J. Bianca	Aug. 1970
9-11	Nicholas J. Dimaio, Sr.	May 1975
9-8	Richard F. Muller, Jr.	June 1970
9-4	Joseph E. Frey	April 1967
9-4	Harold G. Schreiver	June 1972

TARPON

206-0	Johnny A. Guidry	July 1973
198-8	Oswald Frey	Sept. 1951
195-0	Schuyler Thibodeaux	Sept. 1973
192-8	Carlos B. Harvey	June 1973
189-4	Lance Schouest	Oct. 1976
188-12	Carl Schmidt	Aug. 1971
188-8	Ray Coker	Aug. 1974
186-12	Cyrus Vernaci	Aug. 1972
186-12	George J. Bertucci	Oct. 1975
185-0	George C. Fakier, Jr.	Aug. 1970

TRIPLETAIL

39-8	Mrs. Jimmy Toups	July 1959
33-12	Mrs. Mary G. Blackmon	Aug. 1970
33-12	Jeff Toups	July 1973
33-0	Bob Moran	June 1953
32-0	Jimmy Toups	July 1970
29-0	Mrs. Jimmy Toups	July 1970
28-8	Lawrence Federico, Jr.	Aug. 1971
26-8	Mrs. Jimmy Toups	July 1970
25-4	Mrs. Clavena Cognevich	Aug. 1970
23-12	Dennis Dimak	Aug. 1964

WAHOO

139-4	Myron J. Fischer	April 1976
124-8	Salvadore Perino, Jr.	May 1974
110-0	Mrs. Homer J. Moore, Jr.	1964
103-0	William H. Barrett, Jr.	July 1973
95-6	H.L. Herrin	April 1975
92-0	Dr. Wilson P. Couch	May 1975
90-9	Clyde V. Hawk	July 1968
85-8	Mrs. Sherran Fritchter	June 1975
84-0	Stephen Couch	May 1975
81-6	Dr S.E. Ellender	April 1975

WHITE MARLIN

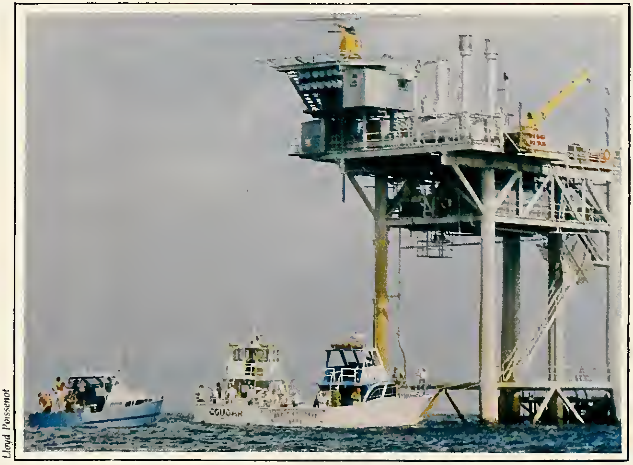
134-0	Dennis L. Good	July 1967
110-8	George M. Snolling, III	May 1968
103-4	Sidney Gonsoulin	Aug. 1973
103-0	Mrs. Al R. Childress, Jr.	May 1967
100-0	William L. Manning	July 1966
99-8	Harley B. Howcott	July 1967
98-0	Dr John Chadwick	Oct. 1969
95-8	Mrs. Mary Smith	May 1964
94-8	DeWitt Rackley	Oct. 1967
93-10	Bob Peterson	Aug. 1976

WHITE TROUT

11-0	Donald H. Marion	Sept. 1973
10-8	James Gomez	Jan. 1973
8-4	Dale Schlottman	Aug. 1975
7-1	Lucas J. Giordano	June 1974
7-1	Dan Mandet	Aug. 1975
6-12	Eddie Eiermann	July 1974
5-9	Delmar Perry	Aug. 1975

YELLOWFIN TUNA (Allison)

201-8	Alvin E. DuVernay	June 1971
199-6	William A. Good	July 1969
196-8	Guy C. Billups Jr.	May 1966
196-0	Clyde V. Hawk	June 1968
195-4	Henry F. Page, Jr.	July 1973
182-12	Tim Stroke	June 1976
181-0	Richard H. Braud	June 1966
181-0	Capt. Tom Holliday	May 1975
180-0	Clyde V. Hawk	June 1966
179-0	George C. Stringer, Jr.	July 1970



Lloyd Poissenot

RAINBOW RUNNER

8-14	George R. Scherer	July 1976
8-12	Don Latil, Sr.	July 1972
8-11	Jack N. Farmer	June 1976
8-8	Sidney Harold	Aug. 1975
8-8	Buzz Snyder	June 1976
8-4	Jack N. Farmer	June 1976
8-3	Buzz Snyder	June 1976
7-2	Dr. Joseph A. Tusa	June 1976
7-0	Frank Caliri	July 1976
6-15	Ken Begneaud	July 1976

REDFISH

56-8	D. L. Comish	Sept. 1963
51-8	Philip A. Robinson	June 1967
47-8	John E. Dakin, Jr.	Dec. 1975
46-0	James T. Brady	Sept. 1972
46-0	Mrs. Pauline G. Rohm	May 1974
46-0	Johnny Ledet, Jr.	Aug. 1976
45-12	Joseph Vetrano	Oct. 1957
45-8	Nick Martinolich	Aug. 1970
45-0	Patricia A. Santolucito	Feb. 1975
45-0	Robert Arthur Buuck, Sr.	April 1975

SAILFISH

86-0	John Launcella	Oct. 1953
85-0	Arnold D. Domin	July 1965
84-4	Grant A. Rodriguez, Jr.	May 1975
83-4	W. McKerall O'Neil, Jr.	June 1974
82-2	Frank Tutzauer	June 1971
80-0	Dennis L. Good	Oct. 1967
78-9	Dr. Jerry R. Smith	June 1968
78-0	Don Locasio	July 1971
77-8	Tim Sebastian	July 1964
77-0	Mrs. Camille Cazedessus	Sept. 1955

SHEEPHEAD

14-12	John N. Bourg	May 1970
14-4	Eugene Lefort, Jr.	March 1971
12-4	James Summersgill, Jr.	July 1872
12-2	Dudley J. Bourg	Oct. 1970
11-14	Mrs. Bruce Matherne	Feb. 1974
11-13	George P. Bourg	Aug. 1972
11-8	Mrs. Aubrey Bares	1955
11-8	Steve Troesch	Dec. 1956
11-6	Eugene Lefort, Jr.	May 1871
10-15	Freddie J. Bourg	Dec. 1971

SNAPPER

74-0	Jim Meriwether	Oct. 1963
39-2	Mrs. Jesse B. Lane	May 1975
35-0	Marvin E. Griffin	Aug. 1967
35-0	Bill Barnhill	Aug. 1971
35-0	Dr. Joseph A. Tusa	Aug. 1975
34-15	Alvin G. Kamm	June 1975
34-0	Gordon E. Tuma	July 1974
32-0	Jesse B. Lane	June 1971
31-8	Donald F. Locascio, Sr.	June 1973
31-4	Gordon E. Tuma	May 1973

SPADEFISH

9-4	Benny Avera	Dec. 1969
8-8	Schuyler Thibedeaux	April 1972
8-6	Wilson Couch	June 1972
8-3	Charles Sebastian	Aug. 1963
7-8	Hilary Blanchard	June 1976
7-5	Charles G. Donewar III	May 1976
7-4	Clyde Martin	Sept. 1976
6-15	Sam Sharp	July 1966
6-10	Robert J. Note	Aug. 1966
6-10	Mrs. Dennis Visler	July 1976

— FRESHWATER SPECIES —

BOWFIN

20-8	Bryan Fant	April 1976
17-8	Julius E. Aaron	Feb. 1973
16-8	Ike Dunlap	May 1974
16-1	Francis J. Gautreau	Nov. 1975
14-12	Mary T. Boose	April 1975
13-8	Raymond H. Calloway	Sept. 1974
13-2	Tom Stinson	July 1976
13-0	Dalton L. Pollet	Feb. 1975
12-13	L. Maurice Lasserre, Jr.	July 1975
12-13	Bobby J. Jones, Jr.	Nov. 1975
12-13	Daniel C. Mestayer	Oct. 1976

BREAM

2-8	Grant M. Kelly	1959
2-8	J. W. Parker, Jr.	June 1961
2-5	Lloyd G. Hoover	April 1970
2-4	J. W. Parker, Jr.	May 1960
2-3	Joe Hudson	June 1973
2-2	Otis Marshall	May 1966
2-1	Dee Murphy	April 1957
2-1	Kent Hollenshead	June 1976
2-0	Cal Bankston	March 1974
1-14	Fernin Grigsby	1947

BUFFALO

52-0	Tommy Descant	July 1976
40-0	Ray Rhymes, Jr.	July 1975
26-4	Arnold Watson	May 1974
26-0	V. Bonny Collura	July 1976
24-0	Robert Prator	Aug. 1973

CARP

27-0	Edgar Coltharp, Sr.	June 1975

CATFISH

62-0	James W. Hibben	March 1970
52-3	Darrell J. Farris	Jan. 1970
52-0	James W. Hibben	Jan. 1970
46-0	E. F. Witteborg	June 1966
43-0	Milton Blackwell	Aug. 1975
33-8	Lucien A. Robert	June 1975
25-9	James D. McGovern, Jr.	Jan. 1969
24-0	Doyle Wayne Boyd	Jan. 1974

CHAIN PICKEREL

5-9	Edward R. Nelson	Nov. 1976
5-4	Ross F. Miller	Aug. 1976
5-4	Walter Metter	Oct. 1976
4-8	Anthony E. Hough	Feb. 1976
4-5	A.L. Setzer	Jan. 1977
4-3	Bob Leavines	Feb. 1976
4-1	Dave McLain	April 1975
4-1	Edward T. Reis	Sept. 1976
3-13	Lamar H. Oxford	June 1976
3-12	Kenneth Ray McCullough	July 1976

CRAPPIE
(sac-a-lait)

6-0	Lettie Robertson	Nov. 1969
4-4	Welzie Garrett	April 1950
4-0	Ronald P. Cobbs	June 1971
3-14	Pat Cullen	March 1960
3-13	Nellie Keller	Feb. 1964
3-12	L. M. Owens	Feb. 1973
3-8	Robert L. Nelson	Feb. 1971
3-6	William D. Temple	Feb. 1974
3-3	E. Lawrence Klein	April 1968
3-1	John Brent Roy	April 1971

LARGEMOUTH BASS

12-0	Harold C. Dunaway	Feb. 1975
11-13	Jack O'Connor	April 1972
11-11	Elwin Husser	Nov. 1958
11-9	Jake J. Crater	May 1971
11-8	Richard Brasher, Jr.	Feb. 1976
11-6	Zeke Davis	March 1962
11-2	James Strickland	Jan 1974
11-1	John T. Allen II	May 1973
11-0	Robert Berry	March 1969
10-13	Dudley R. Pitt, Sr.	Nov. 1972

LARGEMOUTH BASS
(caught on fly rod)

8-8	Nesbitt W. Hagood III	April 1971
7-6	Dr. James W. Lorio	Dec. 1975
6-11	Gordon L. King, Sr.	Oct. 1965
6-9	Shelby Bordelon	March 1975
6-2	Daniel C. Mestayer	March 1976
5-13	Dr. James W. Lorio	Sept. 1974
5-10	Daniel C. Mestayer	March 1976
4-12	Henry J. Sheppard	Feb. 1975
3-12	Dr. James W. Lorio	Oct. 1975

REDFIN PICKEREL

1-8	Keith W. Henderson, Sr.	Nov. 1974

SPOTTED BASS
(Kentucky)

4-14	Vernon C. Johnson, Jr.	Aug. 1976
4-6	Jim Farr	Feb. 1976
4-4	Ben M. Strange, Jr.	July 1976
4-3	Carroll Perkins	Oct. 1939
3-15	Charles J. Kennedy	May 1976
3-14	Jeff Hughes	Nov. 1975
3-13	Charles J. Kennedy	Feb. 1972
3-10	Charles J. Kennedy	May 1976
3-8	Franklin D. King	Sept. 1975
3-6	Daniel K. Tabberer	Aug. 1972

STRIPED BASS

25-4	Robert Andries	March 1976
23-4	Dennis D. Boyett, Jr.	March 1975
22-0	Jerry Bonnett	March 1975
21-13	Dan W. Condon	March 1975
21-8	Wimpy Thiels	April 1975
20-8	Herman W. Holt, Sr.	April 1975
20-1	Donnie Mann	April 1975
19-12	Robert Andries	April 1975
19-12	Herman W. Holt, Sr.	April 1975
19-4	James R. Gamble	March 1975

WARMOUTH
(goggle-eye)

1-8	Allen Polk	Sept. 1973
1-6	Glenn R. Battle	June 1971
1-6	Lloyd David Sexton	July 1975
1-5	Dr. James W. Lorio	Aug. 1973
1-5	Leonard Gremillion, Jr.	April 1974
1-5	John J. Guarisco	June 1976
1-3	Dr. James W. Lorio	Aug. 1971
1-3	Dr. James W. Lorio	Sept. 1973
1-3	Charles Lea	May 1974
1-3	Sonny Guice	May 1974

WHITE BASS
(Bar Fish)

3-14	Sam Parrish	Feb. 1969
2-3	Todd Palmisano	Oct. 1974
2-2	John A. Schexnayder	Oct. 1975
1-10	Pattie DiMattia	Dec. 1975
0-13	Keith W. Henderson, Sr.	Jan. 1976
0-13	Jay Quiros	Dec. 1976
0-11	Vernon E. Quiros	Dec. 1976

ConservatioNotes

— KNOW THE BOATING LAWS —

It's now the middle of the summer boating season. If you're one of those lucky people who has fun afloat, be sure you're complying with all boating safety and registration laws.

In 1976, 5,508 citations were given out by department enforcement agents for various violations of the boating laws: 2,111 of the citations were for life preserver and water skiing violations and 3,016 for boating registration infractions.

Laws commonly violated require that:

— All boats powered by machinery must be registered.

— All persons 12 years of age or younger must wear a Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD) while underway in a motorboat which is less than 26 feet in length.

— Boats towing a skier must have an observer in the boat in addition to the operator.

— All recreational boats less than 16 feet in length and all canoes and kayaks must have a Coast Guard approved Type I, II, III, or IV PFD for each person aboard. All recreational boats over 16 feet in length must have one Type I, II, or III PFD for each person and also one throwable Type IV on board.

For further information on Louisiana boating laws contact the local office of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

— ERIC AND THE INDIANS —

Eric Lacefield, biological aide with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, spends a lot of his free time literally trying to keep some of Louisiana's heritage from washing away.

Lacefield and boat captain Tony Doucet, whose official duties involve marine research, have so far recovered six Indian skeletons and various artifacts from a shell midden in lower St. Bernard Parish. The latest skeleton was found April 27.

Without their interest these relics of our past would have been lost to the tidal erosion which is eating away at the coastal marshes.

They first learned of the site in 1972 when they took Robert Newman, curator of anthropology at LSU, out to survey it. Since then they've visited the shell mound whenever their duties took them near it. They've also discovered a new shell midden some 35 miles away from the known site.

The mound, which was actually the Indian's garbage dump and burial place, is made of the shells of a species of brackish clams which were a major part of the Indians' diet. The clam shells and bones found at the site, including alligator, waterfowl, muskrat, and freshwater catfish, indicate that the lower marshes of St. Bernard Parish were freshwater some 900 years ago.

Eric Lacefield at the archeological site which has yielded up six Indian skeletons. The shell midden is slowly being eaten away by tidal erosion.

— HERE COME THE STRIPERS —

The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has recently completed this year's Toledo Bend Reservoir program to artificially produce striped bass and hybrid bass fry for stocking Louisiana and Texas waters.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department assisted in the program and received a share of the fish.

A total of 12,712,00 striped bass fry and 1,700,000 hybrid bass fry were produced this spring. Louisiana got 8,664,000 striped bass fry and 1,156,000 hybrids. These fry were placed in state fish hatcheries in Monroe, Lacombe, Forest Hill, and Rockefeller Refuge, and in a federal fish hatchery in Natchitoches.

Texas received 4,048,500 striped bass fry and 544,000 hybrids and have agreed to release 25% of the striped bass fingerlings produced back into Toledo Bend.

Louisiana will release 500,000 fingerlings produced at the hatcheries into Toledo Bend. Striped bass fingerlings will be stocked in the Pearl, Tchefuncte, Mermentau, and Calcasieu Rivers. The remaining striper fingerlings will be released in several land-locked reservoirs.

Hybrid fingerlings will be released in selected lakes to help control excess shad fish and replace them with hybrid stripers, a popular and hardy game fish.

— WORDS TO LIVE BY —

Enclosed is a pledge verse written by Lucius Coke of Kenner, Louisiana. In a letter to the Conservationist, Mr. Coke says, "this pledge is a matter of national necessity."

He sent a copy to President Carter, hoping it would be used on the national level. We like it so much, we're presenting it here as well.

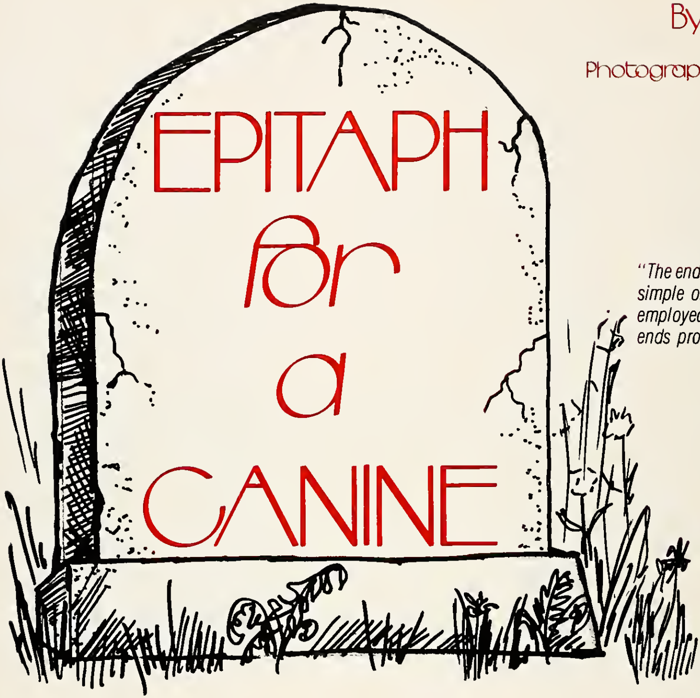
WE, AMERICAN CITIZENS PLEDGE

Care and protection
Of our
Natural and
Scenic
Environmental
Resources with
Vigorus law enforcement
And then, united as one,
Together
In this
Our most vital
NATIONAL ENDEAVOR!
Coke 1977

EPITAPH for a CANINE

By Clany Soileau

Photography By Lloyd Poissenot



"The end cannot justify the means, for the simple obvious reason that the means employed determine the nature of the ends produced." – Aldous Huxley

A tattered remnant of the South's once thriving population of red wolves is making a last stand for survival in southwest Louisiana and southeast Texas. The few wolves left are now ravaged by parasites and disease, few of their young live to maturity, and slowly but relentlessly their numbers are falling. Without special measures, it appears that the red wolf (Canis rufus) will vanish forever in the next year or two.

Why is the red wolf disappearing? The reasons are similar to those which account for the plight of other endangered species — loss of habitat and overkilling. But with this animal, there is one ironic twist.

The red wolf is interbreeding with all canines that come within its range and the subsequent hybrids then in turn interbreed with other canines. Inevitably . . . soon there will be no pure-bred red wolves left, only a population of wolf-coyote-dog hybrids.

The pure-bred red wolf is a rangy, long-legged animal that is smaller than the gray or timber wolf but larger than the coyote. The shape and size of its massive head distinguish its wolf-like appearance from the more pointed fox-like head of the coyote. Though coloration is much like the coyote the red wolf does occasionally have a lighter cinnamon color around the muzzle and eyes.

Red wolves prey on small animals such as rabbits, squirrels, and muskrats and when necessary and available crawfish, insects, and even fruit. Since they don't hunt large animals such as caribou or moose like their northern relatives do, they don't hunt in large packs. The animals do travel in family groups or small packs and will dig dens for their litters of from three to seven pups a year.

The red wolf's range once extended from Texas to Florida and throughout the states in between. Now the only surviving wolves are in the Louisiana parishes of Cameron and Calcasieu and Chambers and Jefferson Counties in Texas.

The red wolf's precarious position on the edge of extinction is the result of years of human persecution and land use changes. Ever since the animal was identified by man it has been second-class. Even nursery rhymes make it a foe. Bounties, have been offered to wolf killers because of the creature's real or alleged depredation of livestock. Even the mention of the wolf's name can cause fear.

Yet at the same time the animal's habitat has been changing because of agricultural and industrial development. Man has altered land use patterns not only at the wolf's expense but in favor of the coyote. It is the expanding coyote population, a more adaptable animal, that is now engulfing the few remaining red wolves.

It was originally thought, some years ago, that the pure red wolf could be preserved in the small coastal area to which it is now restricted by protective measures. This idea was abandoned when research showed that coyotes and wolf-coyote hybrid populations were expanding and moving into the red wolf area and interbreeding. No amount of protection in its present location can keep the wolf from

breeding with other canines and the pure-bred red wolf from disappearing.

Curtis J. Carley, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and project leader for the red wolf recovery program, now feels there are only two ways to save the red wolf as a separate species. One of these is to establish captive breeding populations in properly equipped zoos. The other is to establish a breeding population in the wild by translocating a small group of red wolves to an area free of coyotes or other canines.

To secure animals for either of these programs the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, have been cooperating in trapping and studying wild canines in the known present range of the red wolf.

The jaws of the traps used in the recovery program are filed down and rounded and although an animal may be bruised by the traps it should not suffer any broken bones or ligament damage. Carley pointed out that a wolf is most likely to be injured fighting to escape from a trap. Because of this the traps are lightweight and are not anchored to the ground. They are equipped with a chain and anchor so that the wolf can drag the trap to heavy cover to hide.

The anchor will catch in the shrubbery and hold the animal near the spot where it was trapped. Since a wolf will generally try to bite the trap to escape, tranquilizer tablets are attached so that the wolf will ingest enough of the chemical to either become very drowsy or go to sleep. The traps are checked at least every 24 hours and in the morning. So wolves, being nocturnal animals, should not be in a trap for very long.

Once trapped the animals are treated for the various ailments which afflict them in the wild. The most serious external parasite is sarcoptic mange caused by a mite. The mange may be so serious as to have denuded an animal of hair and to form serious sores that may be infected. In most cases these can be cured. Internal parasites are always present, including heartworms and hookworms.

Once they've been treated the trapped animals are examined to determine if they are pure-bred wolves or hybrids. Various methods are used, including analysis of skull x-rays and body measurements and size.

The best animals are then sent on to the Point Defiance Zoological Park at Tacoma, Washington, the only organization that was interested in such a program and that could develop the facilities required. There are currently 20 red wolves being held at the zoo and seven others either at the holding pens at Carley's Beaumont facility or at the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge.

In May four litters, the first red wolves ever to be born in captivity, were born at the Point Defiance Zoo. Red wolves only breed and give birth once during the year as opposed to domesticated canines which breed year round. The animals breed during January and February and whelp (give birth to pups) during April and May.

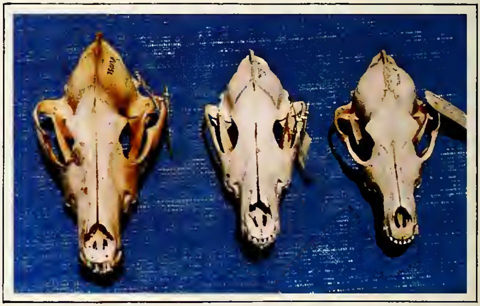
These births prove that red wolves can be kept and raised in captivity. Later, the animals could be trained for release in suitable wild areas or dispersed to other zoos.

Captured wolves which are not found suitable for the captive breeding program are either released where they were captured or at some other safe place. Radio telemetry collars are often attached to the released wolves so their movements can be followed and studied. Wolves are not released on private land without the owner's permission.

In addition to establishing a breeding population of captive animals, the other objective of the red wolf recovery program is to translocate a group of pure-bred red wolves to some location free ot other canines where they can become established in the wild with no risk of their interbreeding. As a first step toward this goal a mated pair of wolves were released on Bulls Island off the South Carolina coast this past December. The wolves had been captured near Port Arthur, Texas, and taken to the zoo in Tacoma for nine months.

The release on Bulls Island was extremely important for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the need to develop public support for any translocation project involving the red wolf. A similar attempt to establish four eastern timber wolves in Michigan in 1974 ended disastrously. Three wolves were shot and one was killed by a car.

The wolves were released December 13. They spent the next week exploring and seemed ready to settle down on the island. They were fitted with radio telemetry collars so their movements could be followed closely. Bulls Island is marshy, semi-tropical, and teeming with wildlife, including, racoons, squirrels, marsh rabbits, and deer. The wolves as the largest predators, aside from alligators, would have had little trouble surviving and fitting in well ecologically as a control



Scientists now keep skull models of red wolves, coyotes and wolf-coyote hybrids because interbreeding between the canines often cause identification problems. Left to right are: red wolf, coyote-wolf hybrid, and coyote.

Joe Herring

This past May was the first time red wolves ever were born in captivity. A pair gave birth to four litters in the Point Defiance Zoo in Tacoma, Washington. It was a landmark occurance – and might be the only way the species will avoid extinction.

on the numbers of the other animals. They had been kept in a holding pen on the island for five weeks to become accustomed to their new home. As the experiment progressed, analysis of the wolves' droppings showed they were hunting successfully and were well fed.

Unfortunately, on December 19 something apparently frightened the female. She abandoned the male, who had gone exploring, and in broad daylight fought her way through the mud of a three-mile wide tidal marsh to the mainland. Her behavior was unprecedented and totally unexpected.

One of the main provisions of the agreement between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the South Carolina authorities was that if a wolf were to escape all necessary action would be taken to assure that it did not run free on the mainland.

Officials in charge of the project waited to see what the female would do. When it appeared she might try to move further inland they made the decision to capture her rather than wait to see if she would attempt to go back to the island.

She was located by following the signals broadcast by the radio collar and shot with a tranquilizer dart from a helicopter. It was then decided to capture the male too. Four hours after the capture helicopter took off, both wolves were back in the holding pen waiting further action.

A second attempt was to have been made in June to release the animals, but before anything could be done the female died in early April of a severe uterine infection.

Red wolf program officials now have several options. A decision was to have been made sometime this summer whether to move the translocation experiment to a new site, bring a new female to Bulls Island and release the two wolves again, or bring the male back to the zoo in Tacoma and try to establish a completely new pair on the island.

John Dorsett, biological technician with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, holds a hybrid wolf pup. When the animal was brought to the Beaumont facility by a rancher, it was in extremely poor condition. Now fully recovered, it will be released into the wild when it matures.

Wildlife experts are now considering various other sites in the animal's historic range in which to locate new populations of red wolves.

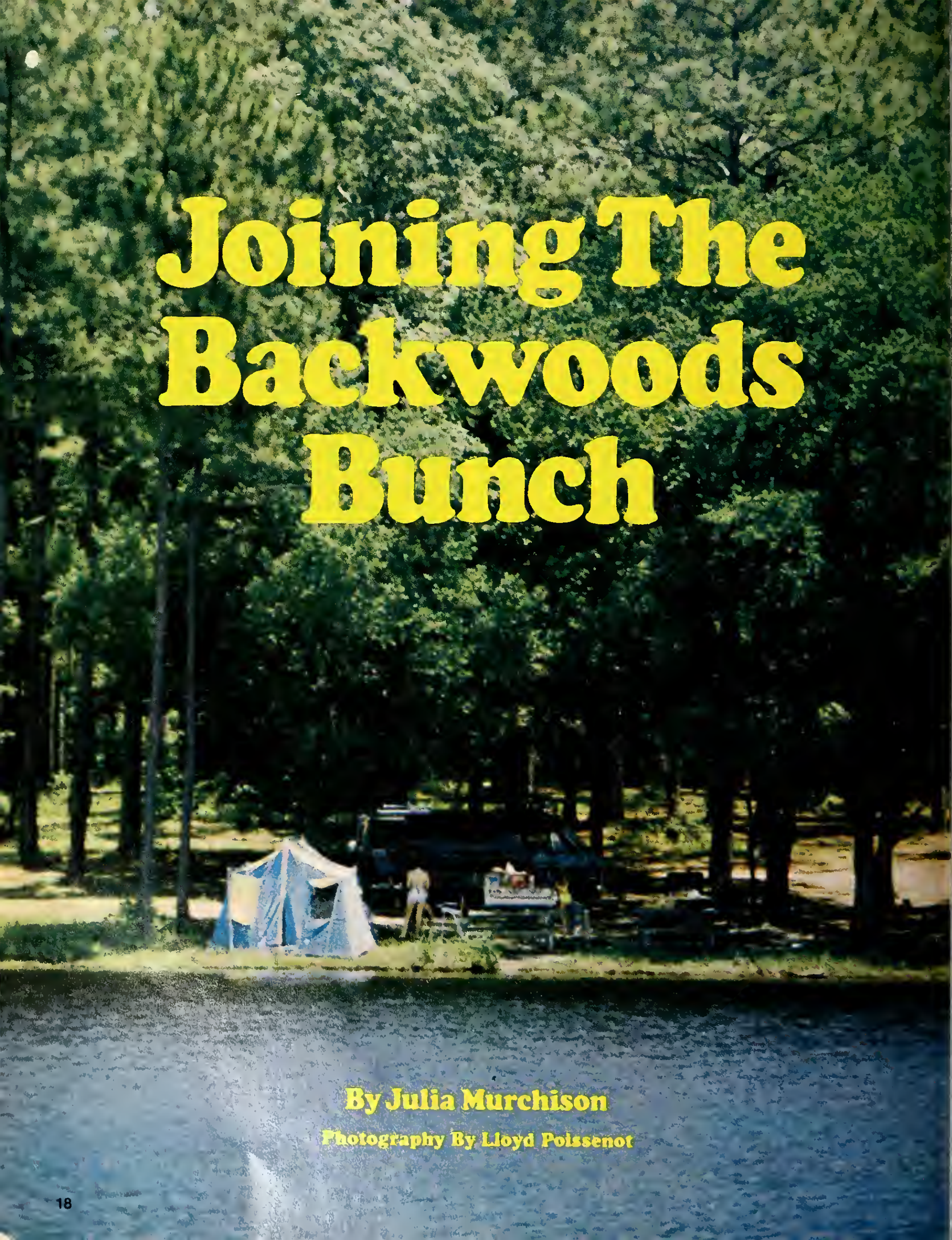
The effort to save the red wolf is not cheap. It costs a lot of money and takes a lot of time on the part of many highly trained people. Why should society go to so much trouble to save this creature?

This is a difficult question to answer. According to Curtis Carley, there are many reasons why man should try to save endangered species. Some of the endangered animals are very important in biological or ecological chains. They fit into a complex relationship with other animals which will fall apart if any one of them is removed. There is also the aesthetic value of a species. It has taken millions of years and the interaction of innumerable environmental factors to produce the different species which exist on earth. If one disappears it is unlikely that it will ever appear again anywhere. There is also a moral reason. Since man has destroyed the habitat which supported the red wolf and driven the animal to the verge of extinction, many would say he has a moral responsibility to nature to try to preserve the endangered animal.

The most important reason of all, however, may be self interest. Endangered species are ecological indicators. They tell us what is happening in the environment around us. When the large predators are gone . . . so is the wilderness. It is by studying these species and trying to preserve them that we learn about the factors affecting our environment and perhaps learn many ways to benefit mankind.

But will man have time to study the "red wolf?"

As you read this article the final days are coming for this species, and man — himself — has played the major role in the animal's finale. Scientists believe that within three years, the last red wolf living in the wild will die . . . and this article will be the epitaph for a canine.



Joining The Backwoods Bunch

By Julia Murchison

Photography By Lloyd Poissenot

There's no better time than now to get started camping . . . and there are many ways to go.

Your camping home need not weigh more than five pounds, so light you can carry it on your back. On the other hand, you can tow or drive your vacation home to the campsite of your choice.

When you begin to think about a family camping trip or a weekend in the wilderness, don't be discouraged because you've never been before. You can plan a successful trip with only a few essential considerations.

First, you need to decide what kind of camping you want to do. Do you want to hike through wilderness areas, carry supplies on your back, sleep under the stars or in a tent? Or do you prefer enjoying the woods with all the comforts and conveniences of home?

Second, you need to determine everything your trip will involve. What equipment is necessary to suit your particular needs? Find out all you need to know about shelter, sleeping and cooking gear, and miscellaneous supplies to make your camping adventures enjoyable and pleasant.

Third, decide what you want to do so you can plan activities. And fourth, decide where you want to camp.

Your motto should be "know before you go." Always plan ahead before venturing any outing.

Basically, there are two ways to go camping: tent and recreational vehicle. You will have a wide range to select from no matter which category you choose.

— TENTS —

Tents are available in numerous sizes and materials. The Nylon tent is ideal for wilderness camping in any kind of Louisiana weather. It breathes well and is cool in summer and warm enough in winter. A nylon tent with fly or plastic tarpaulin cover stretched over the top is waterproof under normal rain conditions. A fly is an auxiliary roof which not only sheds rain but provides ventilation to make the tent cooler and keep body vapor from making the interior wet and clammy.

When it does rain, don't touch the walls or roof of your tent because it breaks surface tension of the fabric and can cause a leak.

Make certain your tent is equipped with adequate mosquito netting for protection against insects. Tents with sewn-in floors also help keep out insects as well as dampness.

Tents made of Nylon, Dacron, or cotton blended with one of these synthetic fabrics are lightweight, small, and durable. Because of the texture of the fibers, there may be problems with seams coming loose in some of the lower-priced models. Before buying, closely inspect the seams to determine whether or not they are strong enough to remain secure under stress.

Though nylon is a popular material today, before World War II most tents were made of cotton: canvas or duck. These fabrics are very durable but much heavier than synthetics. In fact, their durability can be judged by weight. The heavier they are, the stronger they are and the more expensive.

Tents come in many designs, from the common wedge or "pup" tent for one or two people to the wall tent, a roomy shelter large enough for semi-permanent camping. Two-room cottage tents with screen porches provide adequate space for families or groups. The umbrella tent is almost as easy to pitch as the two-man pup tent, and has plenty of headroom. The mountain tent is lightweight compact, inexpensive, and a favorite of hikers.

The best way to choose your tent is according to how much abuse it will receive, how heavy you want it, and how much you are willing to pay. Prices range from $20 to several hundred, depending on size and quality of material and workmanship.

— RECREATIONAL VEHICLES —

Recreational vehicles (RVs) offer shelter with all the comforts of home — away from home. You can choose whatever suits your style, from the pickup truck camper to a fully equipped vacation home on wheels. If you plan on doing much traveling or if you enjoy the comforts of home, an RV may be more practical than a tent for you. Naturally, they're a bit more expensive but the prices and styles vary from the lower-priced basically equipped vehicles to high-priced plush mobile homes. RVs range in price from under $1000 for the budget conscious to $30,000 and more, if you want to go all out.

Buying the right RV for your purposes requires a careful examination of your needs. Do you want such conveniences as toilet, shower, and kitchen, or just basic sleeping quarters? How many people will be sleeping in the vehicle? What kind of traveling do you expect to do? Do you camp far away from home or nearby? Do you need something rugged for dirt road areas? Do you prefer to tow or drive? Do you already own a vehicle that can hold a camper or tow a trailer? How many miles per gallon will you be able to afford?

There are seven basic types of recreational vehicles . . .

Pickup campers are a good choice if you already own a truck. A camper on a pickup, especially one with four-wheel-drive, is best if you like to travel in the back country. Some slide-in kits contain bunk and galley facilities; some campers sleep right on the floor. This vehicle has a big advantage over motor homes in that it can be lifted off and left at the campsite or at home when you want to use your truck without an RV. Prices for covers start at about $200 and go up to $1000.

Camping trailers have soft canvas walls that resemble tents and give campers a feeling of being outdoors. They are easy to tow and store. Most of them are roomy and contain sleeping bunks for six to eight persons as well as facilities to prepare and eat meals. Folded down, there is no big frontal area to drag down gas mileage. Prices run between $700 and $3,500 depending on how large and equipped the rig is.

Motor homes provide spaciousness and livability without the hassle of towing. You can drive, inside your home, right to the campsite. Four to eight persons can be accommodated. The vehicles usually are equipped with galley and bath. The main drawback is that it must be taken with you every time you need to break camp. Some people bring along bicycles, motorcycles, or even cars for errands such as going to the grocery store. Most motor homes are in the $12,000 to $20,000 range; many are $30,000 and more.

Mini-motor homes have many of the same features as conventional motor homes but are less expensive and easier to handle. The main difference between the two is the kind of chassis they're built on. These smaller models are built on van chassis instead of modified truck chassis like conventional models.

Van conversions, the smallest motor homes, are progressively becoming more popular. Camper vans have raised roofs or expandable tops. They are compact, easily managed, inexpensive, comfortably accommodate two to four persons, and get good gas mileage. Unlike most camping vehicles, you can use them every day of the year and not just for weekends and vacations. Prices range from $7,000 to $12,000.

Travel trailers seem to be a best seller in the camping market. Since they can be towed by most cars, they don't need their own engines and drive-trains which make motor homes more expensive. Another advantage is that they are ready to be lived in as soon as you park at your campsite. You have the additional freedom of the use of your car when necessary. Costs start at just over $1,000 for small trailers with little equipment to large, luxurious trailers at $18,000. Most popular trailers are $5,000 to $10,000.

Fifth-wheel trailers get their name from the hitch used to couple them to pickups. The trailer hangs over the pickup bed about seven feet. This reduces the combined length of trailer and tow vehicle thus reducing trailer sway and lessening the likelihood of jack-kniving.

One of the biggest concerns of RVers is the poor gas mileage — from 6 to 15 m.p.g. for most vehicles. Keep in mind when you decide to purchase one, that bigger RVs get lower mileage; light trailers and van conversions get the best. Driving within the speed limit, keeping the vehicle tuned, and the tires properly inflated considerably increases miles per gallon.

When you have decided *how* you want to go, you will have chosen your shelter: tent or RV. The second step to get started camping is to round up your equipment.

— CAMPING GEAR —

One of the most important things is your sleeping gear. If you are camping in a RV, this may automatically be taken care of by built-in sleeping quarters. All you have to provide in this case are blankets.

If you are sleeping in a tent or in a camper without bunks, you will need to purchase comfortable sleeping bags. Your bedding must be soft enough and warm enough to allow a good night's sleep or your health and comfort in camp will be adversely affected.

If you will be sleeping in a camper, plastic air mattresses make ideal beds. For vehicles without built-in bunks, some people prefer to take along folding cots.

For tent campers, a plastic ground cloth will act as a moisture and dampness barrier as well as help preserve wear on the tent floor. The ground cover and a two-inch thick strip of foam padding the same length as the sleeping bag, will guarantee taking the edge off rocks and sticks you overlooked when cleaning off the tent site. Though ground covers and foam pads allow a good night's sleep, they are generally too bulky for the hiker to carry on a backpack trip.

The efficiency of your camp bed, whether it be a blanket roll, sleeping bag, or mattress and comforter, depends mainly on the type of insulating material it contains.

Down is the warmest and the lightest insulator. Dacron and other synthetic fibers are second not only in warmth and lightness but also all-round suitability. Both are durable.

Wool is a fine choice for camp blankets. It efficiently retains body heat and at the same time allows vapor to escape without dampening the bedding.

Kapok, a natural silky fiber, is a fair insulator. Cotton is a good material for summer. It has one main problem, however, in that it has a tendency to collect and hold moisture. Once it gets wet, it dries slowly. It is fine for indoor trailer camping.

Cooking gear is your next big investment. Backpacking tent campers will want only to take the essentials: one small skillet, one pot, one stirring spoon and spatula, tin plate and cup, knife-fork-spoon set.

RV campers will want to add a more complete set of cookwear to this list, especially for family camping. Your cooking checklist might include these additional items: as many pots and pans as you think you'll need, coffeepot, soap, towels, dishrags, scouring pads, sharp knives, cooking spoons and utensils, plastic cup, bowl, and plate set, stainless steel, bottle and can opener.

Unless you prefer cooking over an open fire or have a built-in range, a portable stove and barbeque grill are camping "musts." In summer, you will need a water jug for fresh water and an ice chest for keeping food fresh.

Clothing should be sturdy and comfortable and suitable for the kind of weather you expect. Wool socks are good for year-round camp wear to guard against blisters. Pants should be shorter in length than normal to prevent stepping on them. Long-sleeve shirts are advisable in all seasons to prevent mosquito bites and sunburn.

Following is a miscellaneous checklist of items you may want to include with your gear: matches (in waterproof container), lantern and fuel, axe (for chopping firewood), compass, maps, folding chairs/table, towels, clock, camera and film, binoculars, duffel bag, flashlight (with extra bulb and batteries), first aid kit, fire starter, insect repellent, pocket knife, rope, fishing rods and reels, tackle box, trash bags and plastic bags (ideal for many uses, from bundling trash to preserving food to storing wet bathing suits), and toilet items.

— WHAT TO DO —

After you have prepared all your gear, you are ready for the third step to get started camping: deciding what you want to do.

Louisiana offers opportunity for a wide variety of outdoor activities. Fishing, swimming, canoeing, waterskiing, horsebackriding, and hiking are a few of the most popular. You will need to plan ahead for whichever activities you intend to pursue. You may want to take along your own boat and fishing or skiing gear. It pays to find out which campgrounds offer activities that interest you. Many have swimming pools, lakes, boat rental, horse rental, and trails.

— WHERE TO GO —

Now you're at the final step: deciding where you want to go. There are numerous campgrounds in Louisiana and many ways you can find out about them.

The Office of State Parks publishes a brochure containing fees, facilities, and regulations for twenty-five state parks. It is available free from them at P. O. Drawer 1111, Baton Rouge, La. 70821. Telephone (504) 389-5761. It is also distributed at the entrance gates of each park.

The Louisiana Campground Owners Association publishes a brochure listing private campgrounds and facilities. It can be obtained, free of charge, by writing them at 7323 Chef Highway, New Orleans, La. 70126. Telephone (504) 242-7795.

The Louisiana Tourist Development Commission can supply you with additional camping information. Their address is P. O. Box 44291, Baton Rouge, La. 70804. Telephone (504) 389-5981. You might also check with local tourist bureaus.

The U.S. Forest Service in Homer, Winnfield, Natchitoches, Pollock, Alexandria, and Leesville can provide information on camping in Kisatchie National Forest. They also have vicinity maps showing creeks and roads.

American Automobile Association (AAA) distributes a very comprehensive guide free to members.

Kampgrounds of America (KOA) issues directories free to customers. They are also available by mail for $1 from KOA, Box 30558, Billings, Mt. 59114. The KOA guide is a reliable source for ratings, prices, locations, and descriptions of facilities. So —

Now you're ready to start camping . . . it's time to join the backwoods bunch!

> **"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life," (Genesis, Chapter 1, verse 20).**

Scientists place the origination of life in the oceans at about three billion years ago. The chemical and physical properties of sea water along with essential energy from the sun combined to make life and the perpetuation of life possible.

The first living cell was probably little more than a dynamic arrangement of sea water with the requisite ability to reproduce. From this cell all life has miraculously evolved.

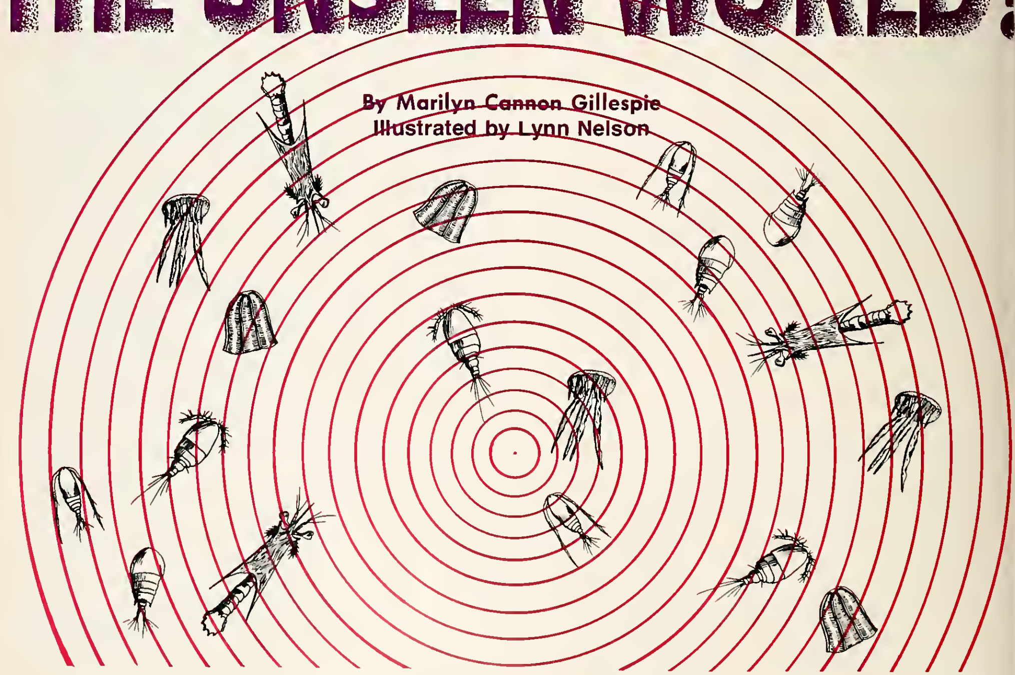
Life in the sea can, in general, be divided into three basic groups: the *benthos*, or life dwelling in or on the sea bottom . . . the *nekton* or swimming animals, including fish and mammals which are able to control their movements irrespective of wind and water currents . . . and the *plankton*, animals and plants which float or drift almost passively.

Plankton occur in both fresh and salt water, but it is the marine plankton with which we are concerned here. The word comes from a Greek word meaning "wandering." Plankton consists of all the plants and animals living in water which lack the ability to swim to any great extent and drift about at the mercy of wind, tides and currents. The number of 'plankters' in the sea is astronomical, but most are microscopic, cannot be seen by the naked eye, and therefore are not as well known as larger animals.

Although, the existence of marine plankton has been known for centuries, the knowledge, diversity, and the abundance of planktonic organisms is quite recent. Both the plant and animal kingdoms are well represented in marine plankton. Photosynthetic

THE UNSEEN WORLD!

By Marilyn Cannon Gillespie
Illustrated by Lynn Nelson



plants are referred to as 'phytoplankton'. The animals are called 'zooplankton'.

— PHYTOPLANKTON —

About 99 percent of all marine plants are the drifting single-celled organisms of the phytoplankton. Marine plants utilize dissolved carbon dioxide and nutrient salts available in their aquatic environment. They also use essential energy provided by sunlight to manufacture their necessary foods (carbohydrates, proteins, and oils). It is a biochemical process called 'photosynthesis'. As long as sufficient light and nutrients are available, these photosynthetic plants will reproduce and flourish.

Basically, there are three major groups in this drifting microscopic world of the sea — *nanoplankton*, *diatoms*, and *dinoflagellates*.

Little is known about nanoplankton because their extremely small size makes them difficult to study, even with a very good microscope.

Diatoms, although minute, can be captured with a small mesh plankton net and studied. They consist of a single-cell with a wall of silica. This "shell," often of intricate design, is manufactured by the organism from minerals (the same found in the sand on beaches) in the sea around it. Diatoms have been abundant since Cretaceous times (63-135 million years ago) and their silica shells have slowly settled to the sea floor to form what is called *Diatomaceous ooze*. Solidified ooze, now above sea level, is mined in certain areas, particularly for use in insulating materials.

Dinoflagellates contain chlorophyll and manufacture all their food, as well as carry on photosynthesis. They have two principal divisions: the "thecate" forms, which have an outer covering of plates of cellulose, and the "naked" forms. Pigments may mask the usual green of chlorophyll, giving colors of brown, yellow, and red. Like diatoms, dinoflagellates often occur in enormous numbers, and "blooms" of these organisms have been recognized since ancient times.

The most infamous of these blooms is the "Red Tide" which is all too familiar to coastal bathers and fishermen. This phenomenon is so called because of the red color imparted to the water in localized areas where these unwelcomed organisms have multiplied at a disasterous rate. Products from their metabolic processes can become toxically concentrated enough to cause massive fish kills.

— ZOOPLANKTON —

Almost every phylum in the animal kingdom is represented in the zooplankton, and a complete discussion of zooplankton would be beyond the scope of this article. A few of the more important organisms, however, will be mentioned to give adequate introduction into the world of drifting animals.

— *Protozoa* are single-celled animals, most of which are microscopic.

— *Coelenterates* are familiar to anyone who has spent much time in coastal areas. They are jellyfish and they are characterized by a stinging cell called a 'nematocyst'. Basically, this specialized cell contains an inverted barb in a sac of poison. When the cell is agitated the sac compresses and shoots out the barb, penetrating the shin of the inauspicious victim. This is also the manner in which prey are paralyzed and subsequently eaten. A very familiar and dangerous coelenterate is the Portuguese Man-of-War.

—*Chaetognaths*, also called arrow-worms or glass-worms, are voracious, carnivorous zooplankton. They are capable of digesting even the very large planktonic organisms.

—*Crustaceans* are the most important, as well as most abundant, zooplankton. They range from tiny water fleas to the sizable larvae of crabs, shrimp, and lobsters. The most familiar is the *copepods*, which are so numerous that some authors refer to them as "insects of the sea." These animals constitute the dominant members of the plankton in the coastal waters of Louisiana, often accounting for as much as 60 percent of a plankton sample. They are the chief food of many fish.

—*Euphausids* make up what is commonly called "Krill." This is an important food source for many fish and is the main food source of the very large basking sharks and plankton-eating whales. W. E. Pequegnat of the National Science Foundation calculated that young blue whales, which grow at a rate of 90 pounds per day, consume about three tons of krill daily.

Planktonic plants and animals in the sea are affected by gravity, and without some type of mechanism to stay afloat they would slowly sink to the sea floor. Plants, in order to survive, must maintain a position where light energy is available for photosynthesis. Their small size somewhat retards sinking. But many organisms also contain oil globules, air sacs, or chemical secretions which tend to increase their buoyancy, and many have spines and other peculiar extensions which help maintain their position in the proper environment.

Planktonic animals are good swimmers and are capable of moving long distances over a period of time, particularly in a vertical direction. But their small size and weight, like the plants, still subjugates them to a drifting existence controlled by such factors as currents, winds and tides.

Plankton occurs in all dimensions of the sea: the length, width, and depth, and in all temperatures and salinities from the cold Arctic and Antartic Seas to the warm tropical waters of the equatorial regions.

— MARINE FOOD CHAIN —

The sea, like the land, is an *eat and be eaten* world. Scientists refer to this as the 'food chain'. The plants are the *producers* — the animals are the *consumers*. Saprophytic organisms (bacteria and fungi) are the *reducers*.

This entire living system is basically dependent on a continuous supply of energy from the sun, an energy that is transferred from the organism to another in successive links to establish the "chain." The old adage, "a chain is as strong as its weakest link," certainly fits the realm . . . for if ever the chain were broken, life in the sea would not survive.

The basic link in a typical marine food chain is the microscopic plants (phytoplankton). These producers, combine inorganic nutrients with dissolved carbon dioxide to form organic compounds and directly or indirectly feed the entire community of the sea. Herbivorous animals feed directly on these one-celled plants. The small herbivorous animals are, in turn, consumed by larger predaceous animals which are themselves finally eaten by still larger carnivores, such as the shark. And man, to a certain degree, is the final predator.

But this chain begins and ends with the saprophytic organisms — the *reducers*. All plants and animals in the sea, as on land, are not eaten. Many die a natural death. These are decomposed by bacteria. And the resultant decomposition products, as well as the bacteria themselves, form used by the plants . . . *thus perpetuating the remarkable cycle of life!*

The relationship of plankton to fisheries has long been established, since many planktonic organisms have become indicators of good fishing grounds. Abundance and distribution of particular planktonic organisms greatly influences the behavior and abundance of certain fish. But what about man? Could plankton someday become an important food source for man? Some plankton is very rich in protein and fat and contains several vitamins, particularly Vitamin-'C'. As the demands of expanding populations increase, the importance of 'farming' the seas will become a requisite part of advancing oceanographic research. Food for man? Maybe.

Nature has carefully designed ways of maintaining a balance of populations . . . some seemingly cruel but necessary for the ultimate survival and perpetuation of any population — an end which justifies the means. Man, the greatest predator, because of lack of interest or foresight, is often responsible for upsetting the balance of nature. But even with regard to the microscopic realm of plankton, man cannot afford to ignore or neglect what he cannot see. Because these planktonic organisms are the invisible giants which — directly or indirectly — may someday feed the populations of the world.

Surfin' Is Super!

By Bob Scearce

Photography By Lloyd Poissenot

There's a simple form of recreation known only to a few who seek pleasure in the great outdoors, only to the beachcombers who wade the wave-washed, sun-drenched beaches along our coast in search of the yellow-mouth speckled trout.

They are the surf fishermen who sally out with a casting rod, a sea-stringer at their belt, and a hatful of lures to meet their quarry on his own terms.

They're wet all day and burned by sun and wind, but the free, unbridled thrill of outwitting the "tiger of the surf" in his own element keeps the surfer going from one battle to another as the cool green water swirls about him.

Here, unlike fresh water fishing, there are no underwater obstructions for your fish to swim under and break your line. No, here the sportsman who loves the fight of fish on light tackle may give full vent to his "ultra" delights.

He may indulge himself in six, eight, or ten pound test monofilament line and know the test of taking the fish is squarely up to his finesse. There is no leverage for the trout out there in the surf — just miles and miles of smooth unbroken sandy bottom.

Set that "drag" on "light" and give those four-pound yellow-mouths their head. Tire them so when they come to your hand at last, there won't be so much as a wiggle when you pick them up.

Landing a "green" or too-fresh "speck" is asking for a hook in the hand when you try to pick 'em out of the water before they're ready to come.

There may be other groups like ours, but this writer, in the company of a handful of other surfers, was the first to know the thrill of the artificials in the surf at Grand Isle.

It was right after World War II in the late '40's when I ran into Andy Kosmoroski on the beach at the island. He was "repping" a tackle company in Houston and passing out silver spoons with yellow bucktails to Frank Swanson, who used to own Swanson's Seafood Restaurant in New Orleans' West End.

There was also Joe Fisher of New Orleans, and Artie Hebert and Red Brunies of Grand Isle. We were nomads of the beaches, hitting the surf at daylight and fishing 'til mid-morning, coming back to camp for rest and food through mid-day and then back into the water in late afternoon.

It was my first introduction to surf fishing with artificials and there was a wild, haunting freedom out there in the surf. Something I always recapture when I wade after speckled trout.

In those early days we caught 'em and sold 'em for expenses to the "Chinaman," an Oriental who had a shack on the bayou near Barataria Pass.

That Red Brunies had the biggest hands I ever saw. They were hams, and when he would put 'em around a speckled trout the fish never had a chance.

Our tackle in those days was simple, for it was in the early stages of development and no match for the beautiful equipment that's available today.

Most surfers use the ultra-light spinning stuff — the open or closed face reel, light mono and the long, slim, sensitive seven foot rod. Some prefer a little more security with push-button, free-spool casting reels with bass rods. It's up to the inividual.

The surfer likes to see a light on-shore riffle, good clear green water so you can

> **"It is important to set the drag on light and avoid horsing any speckled trout in the surf. Remember . . . you are going to pick them up out of the water by hand, and any fish that isn't tired is gonna throw the hook inches before you land him!"**

look down when you're waist deep and see your tennis shoes.

He likes a rising tide that puts action on all sides with trout spooking schools of mullet as they feed beneath them. This is an exciting time. Anticipation heightens for the skilled veteran and if he reads signs, he'll provoke a strike.

Early and late is a good surf fishing axiom. Time is more important than tide. Daylight to 8 a.m. is prime time and 5 p.m. to dark is choice regardless of tide. Favorable rising tide, however heightens the angler's chance of success.

"Before you try surf-fishing, gather as much information as you can about weather, water condition, and recent catches. If it's windy, forget the surf and the trout . . . specks can't see the bait if the water is churning into a sand-laden soup."

Sandbars are important in the surf. If you are beckoned to wade to a shallow bar where light surf breaks 50 yards offshore, wade out to it if you can. Then fish both seaward and back toward the shoreline in the armpit-deep water you've just come through — fish can be both places.

A light khaki or tan poplin long-sleeved shirt and trousers is a good idea, especially if mosquitoes or green flies are present. They are among the little keys in the Chandeleur Island chain.

Long trousers protect you against fins, hooks, and the stinging, trailing tendrils of the Portuguese Man-o'-war. A comfortable pair of high-topped tennis shoes, firmly strung, will protect your feet against sharp oyster shells and keep sand out of your shoes.

A hat is important because it's the surfer's only tackle box, unless you want to make the long walk back to your stake-out on the beach each time you change a lure.

A GI army web belt on which you can fix a stringer-holder is a must, with a straight spike or shepherd's crook surf stringer to fit the holder. A big balsa cork on the other end will keep your fish from getting tangled in your legs as you shuffle along the surf. It also keeps the crabs away from your catch by floating your fish near the surface.

In the surf, unless you have a target of some kind, it's best to cast almost as far as you can. This will give you more coverage on the retrieve. If you find you're getting strikes right in front of you, shorten the cast. But the thrillers come way out on the end, when a big trout swirls and strikes your lure just as it touches the water.

Learning how to land a trout with one hand while waist-deep in water without getting a hook in the flesh is probably the most difficult feat the surfer must master. You must keep a tight line as you reel the exhausted fish by in front of you near the surface. You'll find a shallow indentation just behind the gill cover. This is where you must "take" your fish.

He may shy away two or three times on contact with your hand unless he's really whipped. This is where you take your time. On the next pass if he'll let you settle your grip down on him, put your rod under your arm to free the other hand, and put him on the stringer.

Before trying the surf, give yourself the best break possible. Gather as much information about the weather, water conditions, and recent catches, that a couple of telephone calls can provide. Fish where you are certain fish were in evidence yesterday or recently. Try to eliminate wasted time by trial and error. Don't waste your day in the outdoors fighting heavy, dirty surf. It won't produce for you. If it's windy, forget the trout and try some of those stump knocker bream in the farm pond you've been wanting to "check out." Let the surf settle down until the clear green tide-wash moves along the shoreline once again and conditions are "right" for you.

Some timid folks who would otherwise like to try surf fishing are deterred by stories of sharks taking the stringer. And the all-time box office attraction "*Jaws*" didn't help quell their fears. The truth is a few small sharks are sometimes present in the vicinity of speckled trout concentrations. But be aware they are interested in speckled trout — not you.

Many times, especially in the Chandeleur area, I had a 75 to 100 pound shark nip the last trout on my stringer and I felt the tug on my belt. But these small squalus are after fish and are really quite cowardly. Usually when you slap your rod in the water they'll get you wet with spray in an effort to escape.

I might add that in 30 years of surfing, this has only happened to me about a dozen times. A good idea is to empty your stringer after you have a dozen or more fish on it. For the timid, first-time-out surfers this will lessen apprehension.

Don't forget to empty your pockets of folding money. Many a $20 bill was last seen floating seaward with the tide — gone in water too deep to wade. This has happened twice to me and I know of many other cases where the green stuff simply worked its way out of pants pockets and started bobbing around in the surf.

Some of the greatest surfing country in the Gulf lies off the Mississippi coast in Louisiana waters. The great, 60 mile long Chandeleur Island, pointing like a sword from north to south just off the Louisiana marshes, is a year-round home of speckled trout and redfish. There are a half-dozen cuts along the lower reaches of Chandeleur where trout congregate, and Free Mason Keys, North Island, Breton, and Grand Gosier all are fine shallow water feeding and spawning grounds for trout and redfish.

I have fished all these areas by seaplane from Gulfport, an ideal method of transportation in this vast arena of ultra-light delight. However, today's fast speed hulls can get out there in a hurry. Good shallow harbors for watercraft can be found on the west (protected) side of Chandeleur.

Flashing spoons with yellow bucktails are good, especially if you must cast into the wind, but the long plastic Mirro-lure will always be the champion of the surf.

"Grand Isle and the entire Chandeleur Island chain are outstanding spots to surf-fish for speckled trout. The best times to fish are the summer months . . . early in the morning and late in the evening."

HINTS FOR THE SURF-FISHERMAN

- ***Check the weather before you go – don't fish on windy days.***
- ***Don't fish when the water is muddy – wait till the "clear green" tide laps at the beaches***
- ***Your best action is going to be on "ultra-light tackle." Remember, however, that whatever you use . . . don't be impatient. Tire the fish out before you try to land him.***
- ***Rising tides are best because they bring fish into the beaches.***
- ***"Early and late" is a good axiom for surf-fishing. Daylight to 8 a.m. is prime time; 5 p.m. until dark is choice.***
- ***Sandbars are good places to fish. Walk out to the "bars" as far as you can and fish all sides: left, right, forward, and backward.***
- ***Don't fish in swim trunks. Use a long-sleeve shirt, long pants, and tennis shoes. Clothing protects you from jellyfish, stinging nettles, and sunburn. Shoes keep you from cutting your feet on sharp submerged objects.***
- ***Wear a hat – it's your tackle box!***
- ***Make a "Grand Isle stringer." A long piece of cord attached to a balsa float keeps the fish you catch drifting far enough away from you to protect you from the nibbles of a passing sand shark.***
- ***Set the drag properly and always keep a tight line.***
- ***Best lures are spoons, especially if they are outfitted with yellow bucktails. Among the favorites are those that are chromed, wobble on the retrieve, and imitate the action of small baitfish.***

The "98"

By Julia Murchison

For centuries the sight of brown pelicans wheeling in flight over the Chandeleur Islands or diving into the water to feed on fish skittering near the surface was as much a part of Louisiana as the green and gold grasses that cover the coastal marshes. But by the 1960's those pelicans were gone from Louisiana, victims of the subtle attack of persistent pesticides.

Now there are brown pelicans on North Island in the Chandeleur chain again. There's the nucleus for a colony in the form of 98 young birds. And if things work out right in the next few years, Louisiana will have taken a major step in restoring populations of its official state bird.

The 98 are fledglings brought in from Florida and transported to North Island by boat. North Island was chosen because it offers an environment capable of supporting a healthy pelican population. It lies approximately 60 miles from the main pass of the Mississippi River (the source of pesticides believed to be responsible for die-offs in recent years), and is covered with ample vegetation — chiefly mangrove bushes — used by pelicans to build their nests. Small inlets will provide cover until the fledglings are strong enough to feed themselves, and a food supply is nearby.

In the 1940's and early 50's, North Island was the home of an estimated 50,000 brown pelicans. Biologists hope the flourishing habitat it once provided can again become a nesting ground for these big-billed birds.

The adult pelican eats all saltwater fish except catfish, but his primary diet consists of menhaden, mullet, and other species unfit for human consumption. His method of fishing is more effective than graceful. A plunging pelican feeds like a Kamikaze pilot flies. Soaring 20 to 30 feet above the water, he scans the ripples for schooling fish. Suddenly, wings stretched backward, neck projects straight out, and he nose-dives into the school. When he surfaces, his 18 inch long, 6-inch deep bill fashioned into a sharp, hooked point has "scooped" dinner.

Young pelicans are able to fly and feed themselves at eight to ten weeks. Until that time, they depend on feedings by the adults. The new occupants at North Island are six to eight weeks old and they don't fly — yet. So two wildlife biologists will stay on the island and hand feed them until they learn to fish for themselves.

Does the department expect any problems with the new young birds? Maybe.

North Island is remote . . . and that makes it difficult to maintain and monitor the pelicans. It is necessary to know where they are and when they start nesting activity. The birds must also be protected against hurricanes, flooding, and prolonged freezing temperatures.

Of course, each North Island pelican is identifiable. Each has a band and wing tag. Louisiana has been assigned the color white by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which is easily recognized even in flight. Leg bands and wing tags help trace movement and life histories. With such close observation, biologists can watch for parasites, diseases, and signs of pesticide residue.

When first released the pelicans wobbled around awkwardly, checking their new home. Though solitary by nature, they clustered together. They made no effort to escape to more isolated parts of the island away from wildlife personnel. And within a few hours they appeared quite content with their new surroundings.

So as it stands now, there are 98 baby pelicans trying to make it on a remote island off the Louisiana coast. Will nature's forces be favorable? Will man's influences be detrimental . . . as they were many times before? Or, will as biologists hope, "the Louisiana bird" once again become a common sight along sections of our coast?

Only time will tell.

PIE'S POTPOURRI

By Marian Pie Pendley

"Ah!, What pleasant visions haunt me
As I gaze upon the sea!
All the romantic legends,
All my dreams, come back to me."
— Longfellow.

GENERAL HINTS FOR FRYING FISH

Wash fish and dry it thoroughly. Choose a fat that may be heated to a high temperature without danger of smoking. This is necessary because smoking fat begins to decompose and will give the food an unpleasant flavor. Vegetable oils and fats are preferable to fats of animal origin for frying fish.

Fish may be dipped in a liquid and coated with a breading or meal, or dipped in batter. The coating will keep the fish moist during frying and will give it a delicious crispness.

Place only one layer of fish at a time in the deep fry basket and allow enough room so that the pieces do not touch each other. If you are not using a deep fryer, just drop the fish directly into the fat when it has reached approximately 350°. When the fat is at this temperature, and fish are added, a crust forms almost immediately, holding in the juices and at the same time preventing the fat from soaking in. Fry until the fish are golden brown and flake easily, usually about 3 to 5 minutes.

After frying, drain the fish immediately on absorbent paper to remove excess fat. Keep the fish warm in a low oven until all pieces are cooked, then serve immediately.

SMOKED SPANISH MACKEREL

Clean and gut fish. Season with salt and pepper. Place on greased rack over hot coals. Cover and smoke for 6 to 8 hours, adding coals as needed to maintain heavy density of smoke. However, it must be watched carefully, so as not to have a flame at any time.

FISH SALAD

4 lbs. drum, cut in pieces
  (approx. 5 cups)
2 lemons
4 garlic toes
2 medium white onions
10 peppercorns
¼ bunch parsley
2 bay leaves
4 hard boiled eggs, chopped
5 tablespoons onion, minced
2 tablespoons green onion, minced
2 stalks celery, minced
4 tablespoons mayonnaise
½ teaspoon salt

Wrap fish in cheese cloth. Add to boiling water to which the first five ingredients have been added. Cook about 20 minutes or until fish flakes easily with fork.

Cool fish. Place in bowl and add next six ingredients. Mix with flaked fish into salad form and serve on lettuce. Garnish with lemon wedges, black olives and pimento.

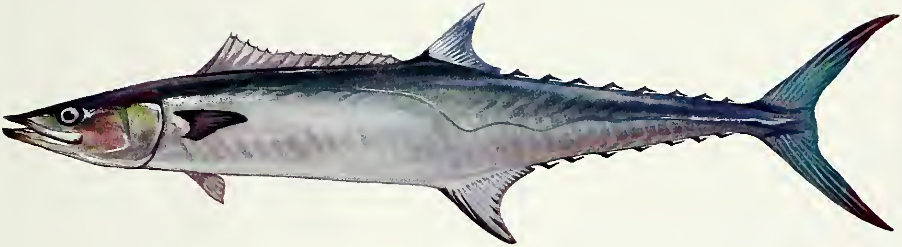
BROILED STUFFED FLOUNDER

1 medium onion, minced
8 tbsps. butter
2 stalks celery, chopped fine
1 cup shrimp, cleaned and peeled
1 small can mushrooms
½ lb. crabmeat (optional)
1 small bay leaf
1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
½ cup cream
Breadcrumbs
Salt and pepper
3 oz. white wine, plus ½ oz. for basting
2 flounders, 2 to 2½ lbs. each
2 tbsps. oil
Juice of ½ lemon

Saute the finely chopped onion in butter until soft; add celery and saute 2 or 3 minutes longer. Add shrimp and mushrooms (with their liquor) and saute until the shrimp are pink. Then add crabmeat, bayleaf, Worcestershire, cream, and enough breadcrumbs to hold the dressing together. Season to taste. Add the wine and stuff the fish. Close the slits with the aid of small skewers and lace up. Heat 2 tbsps. oil along with 2 tbsps. butter in broiler pan, and place the flounder in the pan.

Broil the fish slowly under a low flame, basting with the butter-oil mixture. As the fish begins to brown, add a little more white wine to the broiler pan to increase basting liquid and keep the fish moist. It is not necessary to turn the fish. Keep the flame low and when the top of the fish is golden brown or slightly darker, the fish will be cooked through. Spoon the remaining sauce from the pan over the fish and sprinkle with lemon juice. Serves 4.

Lloyd Poissenot



KING MACKEREL

The king mackerel (Scomberomorus cavalla) is one of the most sought after winter offshore game fish in Louisiana waters.

The fish is a migratory species and large schools move with the seasons throughout the gulf and up the Atlantic coast line. In the summer they are found regularly from Brazil as far north as North Carolina, occasionally up to Cape Cod, but as cold weather sets in they move south or in Louisiana's case, west. The largest schools show up here during the winter months, fishing for them is best from November to April, and at least one charter boat captain feels their migratory pattern is partially determined by the migrations of the white trout, apparently one of the king mackerel's major food sources.

In local offshore waters no one would have any difficulty identifying the king mackerel. The king's close cousin, another favorite food fish, the spanish mackerel (Scomberomorus maculatus) has yellow spots on its sides and is decidedly smaller.

In Louisiana fishermen can go after the kingfish, a common name for the king mackerel, either by drift fishing or by trolling.

In drift fishing a live white trout, or other bait fish, is usually rigged fore and aft with two number 10 gold hooks, thrown overboard, and allowed to swim and drift away from the boat. A strong wire leader is essential because the king mackerel has many sharp teeth.

Fishing for kings like this is usually done while a boat is tied up at a rig and the fishermen are hauling in such bottom fish as croakers and white trout. The bottom fish are usually forgotten when one of the drift lines suddenly squeals out a signal that some big fish has taken the bait. Fast action is essential because the king can either swim under the boat and foul the drift line in the bottom lines or head for the rig and drag the line across the barnacle-encrusted rig supports and snap it.

Trolling is probably the most successful way to pursue king mackerel. If one is caught there is little chance of his fouling the line. The king is a savage fighter that will make several determined power runs, the first right after he feels the hook. A slip on the deck or a lapse in concentration and the fish will either rip himself free or pop the line.

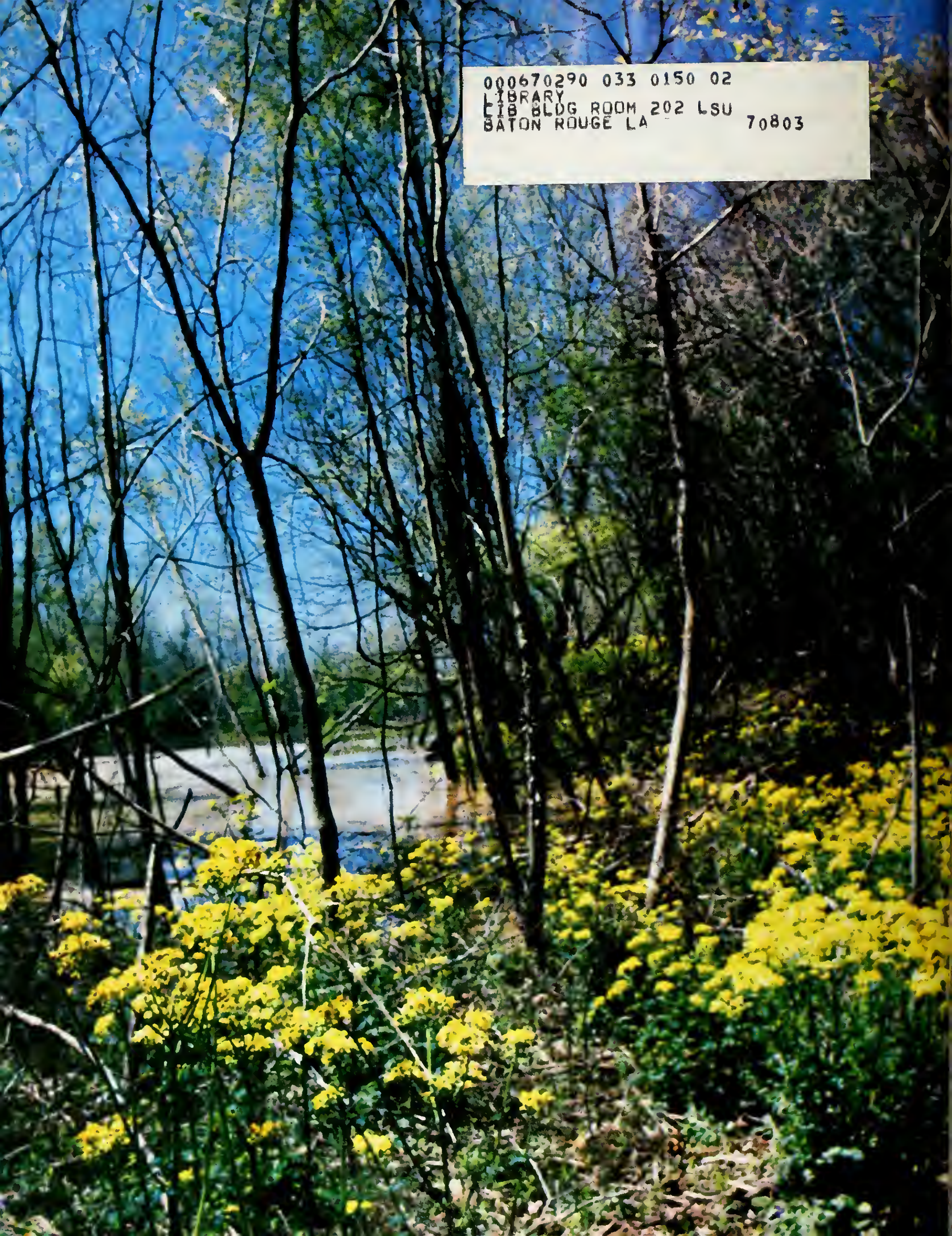
Trolling for king mackerel may involve the use of small baitfish, plugs, jigs, or even flies. According to the king's mood, fishermen will try different baits, depths and speeds when trolling.

Once a school is located, however, fishermen who like a real challenge will go after the kings with light spinning tackle. Fish weighing almost 60 pounds have been taken on 14 pound test line. When the lucky angler hooks a king on light tackle he's in for a long struggle and he'll be wise to have a very large spool of line.

If the fish aren't in a feeding mood, chumming an area can produce results. Sometimes a fishing boat can get action by working near a shrimp boat that's culling the day's catch. Schools of mackerel will eat not only the culled fish but also anything else that comes near them and looks edible.

The world record king mackerel was taken near LaRamona in the Dominican Republic in 1971 and weighed 78 pounds 12 ounces. The Louisiana record fish was taken in February of 1976 by A. Roger Lee, Jr. and weighed an even 72 pounds.

The king mackerel is truly a gourmet's delight. The fish should be skinned thoroughly and cut into steaks. A simple and delicious way to cook this delicacy is to broil the mackerel steaks in butter and garlic and sprinkle them with lemon juice just prior to serving.



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